

“THE CITY OF PLEASURE”: ROMANTIC BUCHAREST THROUGH THE 19TH CENTURY TRAVELLERS’ EYES AND PIONEER PHOTOGRAPHERS’ LENSES

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Abstract

The urbanism principles and regulations were unknown before 1830s in the two Romanian Principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia. Everybody could build his house wherever he pleased. Most of the houses were surrounded by huge courtyards and always enjoyed a vegetable patch in the backyard. Most of the towns look like merely large villages. Between 1830 and 1840, foreign architects – mainly Germans, Austrians, Italians or French – flogged in and were commissioned to design the newly-founded City Halls and other grand scale buildings for public use. Most of the foreign travellers to the Romanian Principalities were astonished and at the same time captivated to see Bucharest, the capital city of Wallachia later of the realm of Romania, with its straggling streets, running from nowhere to nowhere, lacking any concept of urbanism. Even in the second half of the 19th century things had not changed much.

Photographers were also attracted to take cityscapes and to document their town at a certain time. Szathmari, Baer, Duschek, Reiser, Pesky and Spirescu were leading Bucharest photographers who took pictures on the streets or captured old monuments on their wet collodion plates. Through excerpts from travel memoirs and pictures by outstanding photographers “The City of Pleasure”, as Bucharest was called by some of its enthusiastic foreign visitors, is portrayed in its most picturesque times.

Keywords: photography, architecture, urbanism, boyars’ residences, public buildings, foreign travelers’ memoirs.

At the beginning of the 19th century, most of the towns in the two Romanian Principalities, Wallachia and Moldavia, were merely large villages, with more houses, more churches and more lanes than those in the countryside. The urbanism principles and regulations were unknown before 1830s. Everybody could build his house wherever he pleased. Most of the houses were surrounded by huge courtyards and always enjoyed a vegetable patch in the backyard. A wealthy lady boasted that a whole regiment could do its daily drilling in her yard and still have some spare space¹. When he arrived in Bucharest, on 28th of January 1836, Stanislas Bellanger was simply shocked by what he saw around him. After a few geographical details about the country he visited, Bellanger made some intriguing comments concerning the Capital city, comparing it with an African town, in his book, entitled *Le Kéroutza* (The Cart): “Située dans une position basse, et en certains endroits marécageux, cette ville se trouve par 40°27’ de latitude nord, et 23°48’ de longitude est, à 70 lieues de la mer Noire, 18 de Danube et 100 de Jassy, capitale de la Moldavie. Elle offre au premier abord un aspect étrange, j’allais presque dire sauvage, tant elle diffère des villes d’Europe et a de rapport avec les grands villages de la Mauritanie. Si l’on en jugeait d’après l’espace immense qu’elle occupe, elle pourrait aisément contenir un demi-million d’habitants: elle n’en renferme que cent trente mille. Toutes les maisons ou à peu près n’ont qu’un étage, et la majeure partie de ces maisons sont entourées ou de meïdans, ou de jardins, ou de terrains incultes, la plupart d’une vaste étendue”². Another Frenchman, the painter Charles Dousasault who came to Bucharest in early 1840s and spent a few years here, was also astonished not to find a decent place for accommodation except for a few almost uninhabitable inns: „Pour le voyageur européen, le premier aspect de Bucharest cause une surprise à laquelle rien ne l’a préparé. Ainsi, débarqué dans cette ville orientale de Giurgewo sur le Danube, il voit sur l’autre rive luire au soleil les maisons et les blancs

¹ Lucia Bogdan-Seichter, *Bucureștii în anul 1857. Călătoria șefului socialist Ferdinand Lasalle*, in *Calendarul Ligei Culturale pe anul 1926*, p. 38.

² Stanislas Bellanger, *Le Kéroutza*, Paris, 1846, vol. II, p. 11–12.

minarets d'une ville turque. Là, sur cette plage d'Orient, un cocher de fiacre numéroté lui offre, quelque fois en français, un coupé ou un mylord pour Bucharest. Si cette précieuse occasion lui fait défaut, il reprend alors ses rêves d'Orient avec leur pittoresque réalité. Il cherchera vainement un hôtel, une modeste auberge, bien-être inconnu dans ces contrées peu fréquentées des voyageurs étrangers aux pays. Bien heureux s'il peut dormir sur le banc vacillant de quelque kan"³. William Beatty-Kingston was also deploring the lack of any comfortable inn on the main roads of the country and, more than this, the poor food offered by them, if any at all: "Except in three or four of the very largest towns, there was no accommodation for the foreign traveller at all; and in those the few inns were of a quite indescribable sort. If you stopped in them, it was not to eat, but to be eaten. (...) As for the *krisme*, or dram-shops of the villages, which resembled and excelled the very worst posadas of Spanish hamlets, it was hopeless to look for sleeping-room in them. They were all kept by Jews; and the Jews would not take you in – at least not in that way. Your only chance was to «draw» the Starost, of headman of the village, who would generally allot you a shelf let into the clay wall of his family's common bedroom, dining-room, kitschen, stable, and private chapel; where you slept, or did not sleep, with the Starost and his relatives of both sexes, house and farm-servants, ditto ditto poultry, pigs, and domestic insects, besides half-a-dozen or so of rampagious dogs thirsting for your foreign blood, and dead sure to have it, too, if you were unlucky enough to roll off your hapless carcass all throughout the night"⁴.

There were few avenues and most of the streets were narrow and winding around. Houses had no numbers and could be identified after the nearest church or after the near-by important public building or even prominent private mansions, the latter case by mentioning the owner's name. It was only in early 1840s that houses received numbers and the streets (even the less important ones) got their names. Towns were often scattered on large patches of land. The French painter Charles Doussault who spend a few years in Bucharest in 1840 described the residences of the first class boyars as well as that of the second and third class boyars in which were accommodated both their families and a large number of servants: "Le petit boyard habite ordinairement les mahalas, et le grand boyard le Podoumogochaé et les beaux quartiers de la capitale. Une porte cochère donne entrée sur la rue à son hôtel élevé au fond d'une vaste cour, ou des bohémiens, des arendaches et des dorobantz dorment au soleil; tandis que le petit boyard dérobe sa vie moins fastueuse dans une petite maison blanche à la turque, cachée derrière une palissade, à l'ombre des grands acacias, au fond d'un mahala. Un portail, surmonté de hauts piliers en bois bizarrement découpés en clochetons mauresques, donne entrée à cette demeure paisible. Un grand toit auvents protège la maison contre la neige en hiver, contre le soleil en été, et derrière le rideau blanc de mousseline à franges, à sa fenêtre ombragée de capucines en fleurs, la jeune fille du logis jette en travaillant un coup d'oeil curieux sur le chemin désert, guettant le rare passant ou le brillant équipage égaré loin du centre élégant de la grand ville"⁵.

Architects were unheard-of until the early 1830s: all houses – from the imposing residences for wealthy boyars to the modest dwellings for middle and lower middle classes – were built by masons and carpenters, more or less skilled. Between 1830 and 1840, foreign architects – mainly Jews, Germans, Austrians, Italians or French – flogged in and were commissioned to design the newly-founded City Halls and other grand scale buildings for public use. But, in spite of those qualified architects' projects made according to the European taste, most of the local boyars were reluctant to accept their plans and suggestions continuing to appeal to the service of the more obedient masons who used to build their houses in the old days. At most the boyars accepted the rich stucco ornaments the foreign architects introduced to Wallachia in mid 1800s. That was duly observed by a French traveller who anonymously published his memoirs in an 1863 issue of *Le Magasin pittoresque*: "Un rez-de-chaussé élevé de quelques pieds au-dessus du sol, devant la façade principale une sorte de péristyle étroit, une cour commune aux maîtres et à toute espèce d'animaux domestiques, tel est le plan de la plupart des maisons de boyars. De loin, on dirait de l'architecture; de près, c'est un grossier maçonnerie qui n'est ni régulier ni solide. Les colonnes supportant la galerie sont en bois recouvert de terre glaise blanchie à la chaux. Les architectes du pays, juifs ou allemands, y prodiguent des enjolivements qui rappellent de loin le style corinthien. La pluie y cause souvent des dégâts désastreux; une corniche se détache, une grande plaque de terre se détrempe, s'écroule, laissant à nu une partie de l'arbre grossièrement équarri qui forme le fût de la colonne. Pour quelques piastres, le maçon fait un nouveau chef-d'oeuvre, et tout est dit"⁶.

³ Charles Doussault, *Valachie*, in *L'Illustration*, no. 563/10 Décembre 1853, p. 380.

⁴ W. Beatty-Kingston, *A Wanderer's Notes*, London, Chapman and Hall, 1888, p. 6–7.

⁵ Charles Doussault, *Les rangs et les titres en Valachie*, in *L'Illustration*, no. 592/1er Juillet 1854, p. 7.

⁶ *La justice du boyar. Souvenir d'un voyage en Valachie*, in *Le Magasin pittoresque*, no. 24/1863, p. 186.

Most of the foreign travellers to the Romanian Principalities were astonished and in the same time captivated to see Bucharest with its straggling streets, running from nowhere to nowhere, lacking any concept of urbanism. It was not until late 1880s that a smart British visitor, Mary Adelaide Walker, made an amendment to the way her countrymen spelled the name of the city. Appealing to a philological analysis she concluded: "The name of the Roumanian capital «Bucureshti» (the City of Pleasure), being derived from «Bucur» (pleasure or contentment), it may be considered that the rendering of the name adopted in these pages is nearer to the original meaning than that generally used in England = Bucharest"⁷.

Even in the second half of the 19th century things haven't changed much. James Oscar Noyes was an American physician who joined the Turkish army in the first year of the Russian-Ottoman War waged on the borders of the Danube (1853–1854). Noyes visited Bucharest in 1854 and noted huge contrasts at the street life level and in the social strata: "The «City of Peace», as the name of Bukarest implies⁸, is composed of palaces and hovels. It is merely an aggregation of large villages. Here are beautiful gardens tastefully laid out with walks and flowers, and there morasses submerged every spring, where frogs and lizards hold their uninterrupted concerts. The wretched streets paved with stones, or with logs placed crosswise, are deeply covered with mud in winter and dust in summer. In Bukarest legs are a luxury, and carriages, on the contrary, a necessity. (...) The carriage is, in fact, a mark of respectability, for to go on foot in Bukarest, is the same as going barefoot elsewhere"⁹. In the same period, the French journalist Eugène Jouve, war correspondent for "Currier de Lyon", expressed the same astonishment while visiting the Capital city of Wallachia. He had mixed sentiments of admiration for the richness of some areas and disappointment for the poor and untidy quarters of the city: „Bucarest m'a surpris et désappointé. J'y ai trouvé beaucoup plus de richesses, d'animation, de luxe parisien que je ne m'y attendais; et pourtant c'est à peine si l'on peut appeler grande ville ce ramassis informe de riches magasins, de misérables baraques, de beaux hôtels, de monumnets, de jardins, de landes et de marécages, qui occupe un espace presque aussi vaste que Paris et contient à peine autant d'habitants que la seule presque île lyonnaise. Les principaux groupes de maisons sont disséminés au sommet des pentes rapides qui entourent un large bassin qu'une petite rivière comme le Bièvre ou l'Azergue, la Diumbowitza, s'est creusé à soixante pieds de profondeur, au-dessous du niveau de la haute plaine valaque où s'étale le reste de la ville. (...) Dans aucune autre ville européenne d'une population égale, on ne trouverait autant d'ostentation et de mouvement. La multiplicité des églises et des hôtels de l'aristocratie, leur position, élevée en haut des berges du bassin central leur entourage de verdure et surtout le caractère moscovite de leur architecture, copiée sur celle du Kremlin, donnent à l'ensemble de cette capitale un aspect pittoresque et séduisant. Malheureusement les rues irrégulières, mal pavées, sans éclairage et affreusement sales, présentent partout les contrastes les plus heurtés de civilisation raffinée et de barbarie grossière"¹⁰. In spite of his observations concerning the narrow, muddy and winding streets, lacking any lighting during the night, which is to be found in almost all the foreign visitors' memoirs, it is strange that he thought that the style of the noblemen's residences partakes from the Russian one. It is true that in Jassy the Russian neoclassic style was enthusiastically used by most of the wealthy families who built their residences in 1830s and 1840s, but that was not the case in Bucharest. For other travellers, such as the British Beatty-Kingston, a visit in the Romanian Principalities during Alexandru Ioan I's reign, was equivalent with a visit in the dark ages of history like using the fabulous time machine: "When I first visited Roumania, just a year before the base betrayal of John Alexander Cusa by men who owed him everything, travelling in the Principalities was an enterprise of infinite difficulty and of no little danger. Whether you entered them by land or water, so soon as you passed the Austrian frontier, or landed from the Austrian boat, you experienced the sensation of having quitted the modern world, and of being under some strange spell that turned the hand of Time's clock several centuries backwards, and transported you. With your nineteenth-century clothes, luggage, requirements, and tastes, into a land of the Middle Ages, with every characteristic of which you were at once painfully and ludicrously out of keeping. I shall never forget the utter hopelessness that took possession of me as soon as I had become thoroughly penetrated by the conviction of my utter unsuitability to a country the

⁷ Mrs. [Mary Adelaide] Walker, *Untrodden Paths in Roumania*, Chapman and Hall, London, 1888, p. 161.

⁸ The author was wrong in naming București/Bucharest "The City of Peace". Other travellers were more correct in calling the Romanian capital "The City of Pleasure" because Bucur comes from "bucurie" which may be translated with "pleasure, joy, glee".

⁹ James O. Noyes, *Roumania: The Border Land of the Christian and the Turk*, New York, Rudd & Carleton, MDCCCLVIII, p. 121.

¹⁰ Eugène Jouve, *Guerre d'Orient. Voyage a la suite des armées alliées en Turquie, en Valachie et en Crimée*, Paris, 1855, vol. II, p. 172–174.

manners, costumes, and customs of which, classed chronologically, ranged between about 200 B.C. and the fourteenth century of our era”¹¹.

A traveller who cumulated the talents of a painter with that of a writer was Dieudonné Auguste Lancelot who was sent to Romania, in 1860, by the editors of the French magazine *Le Tour du Monde*. His illustrated memoirs were serially published a few years later, in 1866 and 1868. He was also astonished by the great contrasts he met in the Capital city who was already in full process of remodeling after the Union of the Romanian Principalities a year before: “Capitale en cours d’exécution d’un État qui se réorganise, cette ville à plus d’un point de vue intéresse; mais trop de choses y froissent à chaque instant les sentiments de justice, d’humanité, de moralité et de droit pour qu’elle soit dès à présent un séjour longtemps agréable. La ville matérielle, telle qu’elle m’a paru être et telle que j’ai essayé de la faire voir, est bien en rapport avec la population, je n’ose dire la société qu’elle renferme, car la société ne me semble guère plus constituée que la ville n’est bâtie. J’aurais beaucoup de traits de caractère à ajouter à ceux que j’ai déjà cités; mais presque tous sont très-difficiles, plusieurs impossibles à esquisser. D’ailleurs, dans la société comme dans la ville, tout est ruine et renaissance; tout recommence et tout finit; le mal n’y est certainement que provisoire”¹². In spite of the fact that Bucharest was almost as large as Paris it lacked cleanliness and any idea of urbanism, as Beatty-Kingston noted in 1865: “Bucharest, an enormous straggling town, although then owning about 90,000 inhabitants, and covering as much ground as Paris, was as free from pavement as a Russian steppe or a South Sea island. Its streets were Saharas in summer, Sloughs of Despond in spring (and, indeed, whenever it rained), and only practicable for the shod pedestrian in the long severe winters, when they were frozen to a Siberian hardness. The Podo Mogoshoi, Bucharest’s principal street, was at the time scarcely wider than Chancery-lane; but have frequently been compelled to take a cab in order to cross it”¹³.

Unlike Jouve, who visited Bucharest a few years before him, Lancelot considered that the local architecture partakes of the Turkish style: “Du temps de l’occupation ottomane il n’est resté aucun monument considérable à Bucharest; mais de nombreuses maisons éparses dans les faubourgs sont des spécimens curieux de l’architecture turque. Sur la voie publique et dans les rues commerçantes, le rez-de-chaussée n’a ordinairement que de très-petites fenêtres, prenant jour au-dessus de l’oeil du passant; la porte d’entrée, assez petite, est ornée avec un soin tout particulier de moulures qui s’entre-croisent autour d’un petit guichet. Au premier étage règne presque toujours une galerie ombrée, d’où l’on peut voir et n’être pas vu; ou bien du milieu de la façade s’avance un encorbellement très-saillant, percé de fenêtres sur toutes ses faces. Les boutiques, tout en étalant leurs marchandises aux regards, ont des volets et des auvents à demi fermés qui ne laissent rien voir de l’intérieur. Dans les rues moins fréquentées, entourées de jardins à haies de jasmins, quelques-unes de ces maisons ont un air recueilli et mystérieux qui charme tout d’abord. Leur étage inférieur est égayé d’arbustes et de fleurs. Le toit saillant est à moitié caché sous les grappes odorantes des grandes acacias aux troncs penché. La galerie, le divan devrais-je dire, s’ouvre sur des bosquets ombreux, où scintille quelquefois un filet d’eau jaillissante, et où se promènent, dans les plus folles allures, de belles grues cendrées, oiseaux familiers du pays”¹⁴. There were few residences worth of the name of palace, as elsewhere in Europe. Even the ruling prince’s palace was of rather modest appearance. There were but few buildings of any artistic or aesthetic interests in Bucharest as Bellanger noted in his memoirs: “Une douzaine de maisons, sur quinze ou seize mille, prennent les allures de palais; c’est qu’en effet, à certaine distance, les colonnes qui les escortent ou qui les précèdent, soutenant d’élégants frontons couverts de bas-reliefs, justifient assez cette vaniteuse prétention. Mais, quand on s’approche, on ne tarde pas à reconnaître tout ce qu’elle offre d’exorbitant: ces colonnes, de loin si droites et si belles, de près ne sont plus que des troncs d’arbre couverts d’une terre-glaise blanchie au lait de chaux, et ces sculptures, ces bas-reliefs, que de mesquins moulages faits en plâtre. Bref, à l’exception, comme je l’ai dit, de quelques églises, de quelques casernes, de quelques couvents, aucun bâtiment, pas même le Divan, pas même l’habitation de l’hospodar, n’était digne alors de fixer un peu l’attention”¹⁵. In spite of their apparent splendour, most of the private residences were poorly finished and kept in a state of neglect by their owners, as Mrs. Walker observed: “Many of the large buildings in Bukurest have all the appearance of hurried superficial work – making a

¹¹ W. Beatty-Kingston, *op. cit.*, p. 4–5.

¹² D. A. Lancelot, *De Paris à Bucharest*, in *Le Tour du Monde*, 1866, p. 208.

¹³ W. Beatty-Kingston, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

¹⁴ D. A. Lancelot, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

¹⁵ Stanislas Bellanger, *op. cit.*, 1846, vol. II, p. 12–13.

splendid show without solidity”¹⁶. In 1877, at the outbreak of the Oriental War, Bucharest was visited by a lot of foreigners, both military men and civilians. Among them there were some journalists sent by their editors as war correspondents. One of them, Frederic Kohn-Abrest, who represented no less than three newspapers *Le Siècle*, *L’Indépendance Belge* and *Le Rappel*, left some very interesting memoirs where he praised the abundance of trees and gardens in Bucharest but, in the meantime, deplored the lack of any order in the way streets and houses were built: “Les Roumains ont su faire de leur capitale une des villes les plus agréables de l’Europe, une véritable oasis au milieu d’une civilisation relativement peu avancée. Mais la nature les a beaucoup aidés; la capitale entière est semée de buissons odorants, de parterres de fleurs et de grands arbres prodigues d’ombre, qui remplacent plus ou moins efficacement les grands cours d’eau, car sous ce rapport seulement, Bukarest est déshérité; on n’y possède, en fait de rivière, que l’étroite Dombovitz, une sorte de ruisseau qui, l’hiver se conduit mal envers les riverains. (...) Tout Bukarest vit à la campagne sans sortir de chez soi. Chaque maison a son jardin ou jardinet, les églises sont entourées d’une espèce de verdure, et la plus petite gargote a son *gradina* où l’on peut consommer en plein air et à l’ombre d’un sycamore ou d’un acacia. Ce luxe de végétation est le trait distinctif de Bukarest: c’est celui qui me charme le plus, et on le retrouve dans toute l’étendue de cette ville de 240,000 habitants mais qui occupe un espace où l’on pourrait loger très commodément le double. Singulier assemblage où on ne se lasse pas de regarder de tous côtés, de se complaire et d’admirer! Tantôt on suit une rue droite, à peu près tirée au cordeau et traversant la ville tout entière, bordée de belles maisons avec des magasins européens; quelques pas à droite on est en pleine campagne: des maisonnettes minuscules émergeant au milieu de jardins forment un aspect bucolique; par ci par là, on trouve dans un quartier des masures misérables, mais toujours relevées par quelques guirlandes fleuries qui empêchent de sentir trop vivement la misère de ces constructions. Encore quelques pas et l’on est au bas d’une colline qu’il faut escalader pendant plus d’un quart d’heure pour arriver à un cloître tombant à moitié en ruines. Le palais de la Chambre des députés, dont l’aspect rappelle avec beaucoup de vivacité les *burgs* des bords du Rhin, se trouve sur l’un de ces monticules; ce sont des avenues où les arbres séculaires alternant avec les poteaux du télégraphe, des rues d’une longueur démesurée toutes bordées de restaurants, de cafés chantants; enfin, pour ne rien oublier, notons, discrètement, caches derrière des massifs, toute une Cythère formellement noyée dans les jardins. L’architecture de Bukarest est ondoyante et diverse. Aucune réglementation ni sujétion; chaque siècle a laissé subsister son empreinte, et chaque constructeur a agi à sa fantaisie. Jusqu’aux derniers temps, il manquait à cette bigarrure la véritable maison moderne, la caserne à loyer de cinq ou six étages. La spéculation a comblé tout récemment cette lacune, mais d’une façon assez restreinte, en édifiant trois ou quatre hôtels de cinq étages. Les particuliers, heureusement, ne se sont pas encore décidés à se percher à plusieurs pieds au-dessus du niveau de leurs pavés. Les maisons confortables, où se sont installés, avec tout le luxe d’ameublement parisien, les *boyards* comptent un, tout au plus deux étages. Les habitations ordinaires n’ont pas d’étage; on habit au rez-de-chaussée, on y dort, on y mange et on y passe sa vie. Quant aux domestiques des familles moins aisées, ils couchent tout bonnement dehors, selon l’usage répandu dans les campagnes”¹⁷.

Despite or perhaps because of these contrasts, the streets were picturesque and soon attracted the attention of photographers. In mid-1840 daguerrotype cameras along with the whole set of accessories were brought both in Bucharest and Jassy. At first these devices created a stir and a state of confusion; they were thought to represent means of teaching physics and mathematics. They were bought by each country’s Education Ministers and were given to Saint Sava College in Bucharest and respectively to Michaelian Academy in Jassy. In Bucharest the Library of the Romanian Academy still holds a Daguerre’s brochure *Historique et description des procédés de Daguerrotypie et du Diorama*, stamped with the St. Sava College seal¹⁸.

Bucharest still debates who used for the first time that camera. In Jassy, **Teodor Stamati**, a natural science professor, was the first one to use that camera with which he took general views of Jassy. Stamati’s pictures were exhibited in early October 1840, in the Great Hall of the local Academy¹⁹. Even though the pictures hadn’t survived they are considered the first cityscapes ever taken on the Romanian soil.

¹⁶ Mrs. [Mary Adelaide] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 171–172.

¹⁷ Fr. Kohn-Abrest, *Zig-zags en Bulgarie*, Paris, 1879, p. 111–113.

¹⁸ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Fotografii itineranți europeni în ținuturile românești (1840–1860)*, in Daniela Bușă, Ileana Căzan (editors), *Curențe ideologice și instituțiile statului modern – secolele XVIII–XX. Modelul European și spațiul românesc*, București, 2007, p. 229–230.

¹⁹ *Albina Românească*, no. 79 (6 October 1840).



Fig. 1. Ludwig Angerer, The Colțea Tower, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.

Almost twenty years passed until other cityscapes and architecture pictures were to be taken in the Romanian Principalities. During the Crimean War, after the Russians left and the countries were occupied by the Austrian army, **Ludwig Angerer** (1827–1879) a Bucharest based Vienna military assistant chemist took to photography as his favorite pastime²⁰. He used the new wet collodion process to take his pictures. In 1856, he roamed through the streets of the Wallachian capital and shoot pictures of the most iconic places. He pictured Colțea Tower, now an old ruin, but for more than a century the tallest building towering over Bucharest (Fig. 1). To take a few panoramic views, facing west and south, he climbed in that tower, then on Dealul Spirii (the Spirea Hill) and the Metropolitan Bell Tower (Figs. 2, 3, 4). Thus he managed to shoot very accurate panoramas of the straggling Wallachian city. Seen from the above the capital had little to impress the visitor, except the lack of any architectural unity and the eagerness the well-off tried to emulate the Western European styles in building their new villas, in a very much otherwise Oriental town. That was obvious to James Henry Skene who made a full of humor description of the way in which a new house was built: “Wallachians do not seem to shine as architects now more than they did a century and a half ago; such tawdry tinsel cornices and plaster pillars adorn their new residences, so inferior in comfort to our English houses with their homely red-brick faces; and such ostentation mingled with untidiness: a Greek peristyle of Corinthian columns may occupy one side of a courtyard, for instance, and opposite it may be a range of stabling, sheds and dunghills; a marble terrace, on which linen is hung out to dry; and a housemaid’s broom enjoying a sinecure in the principal lobby, with a duster always hanging over the rosewood bannisters of the great staircase. And the Wallachians are fond of building, too. (...) But what appeared to me the most extraordinary was the utter ignorance of all principles of architecture manifested by those amateur builders. They were generally to be seen living in houses, which they had rendered nearly uninhabitable,

²⁰ Margareta Savin, *Ludwig Angerer, unul din primii fotografi ai Bucureștilor* (Ludwig Angerer, one of the First Bucharest Photographers), in *București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie VI* (1968), p. 223–229; Lelia Zamani, *București 1856. O fotografie inedită a lui Ludwig Angerer* (Bucharest 1856. One of Ludwig Angerer’s Unknown Photographs), in *București. Materiale de Istorie și Muzeografie XXI* (2007), p. 357–364; Lelia Zamani, *Oameni și locuri din vechiul București* (People and Places in Old Bucharest), București, 2008, p. 125–143.



Fig. 2. Ludwig Angerer, Bucharest general view taken from the Spirea Hill towards the Antim neighborhood with the Metropolitan Church on top the hill, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.

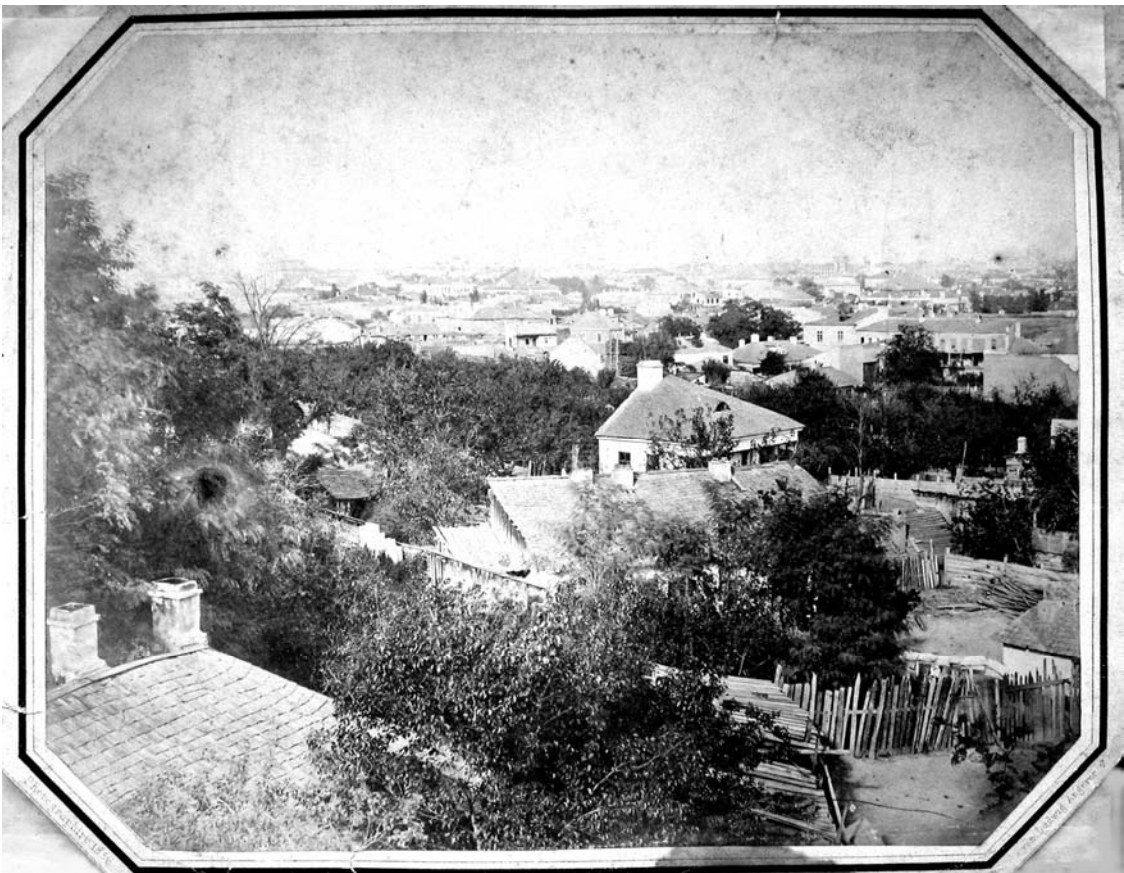


Fig. 3. Ludwig Angerer, Bucharest general view, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 4. Ludwig Angerer, Bucharest general view taken from the Metropolitan bell tower, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.

and which had respectively cost as much as one three times the size would, when built at once, and on a determinate plan. The combinations of rooms, passages, and staircases being unlimited, they were always attempting new ones, and usually, instead of progressive amelioration, they arrived at inextricable confusion. One old Boyar, in particular, was a most unmitigated old bore in this respect; he was constantly scratching rectangles and parallelograms on scraps of paper, until he became so bewildered that he no longer knew how to get either into his house or out of it”²¹.

The Cișmigiu Garden was recently designed by the Austrian architect Carl Friedrich Wilhelm Meyer and opened for the public in 1852. It soon became the main attraction for both locals and foreigners and Angerer took a few pictures of Cișmigiu’s wide alleys lined up with trees and the charming pond in the middle (Figs. 5, 6). It was hard to imagine that only a few years ago that whole area was a swamp where the local sportsmen used to hunt ducks and the mosquitoes brought malaria in the neighborhood. Eugène Jouve, who visited Bucharest in late August 1854, appreciated a lot that place. He noticed that the elegant garden which attracted a lot of people, enjoying the fresh air and a pleasant promenade with its broad, shaded alleys, could have easily compete with the most exquisite parks in Europe: “Il y a quatre ans à peine, le milieu de cette espèce de vallée, qui en certains endroits a plus d’un quart de lieue de diamètre, était encore un grand marais dans lequel les citadins allaient, en pleine capitale, chasser les bécassines et prendre des fièvres pernicieuses. Un homme de talent [Meyer] a transformé cette infecte grenouillère en un magnifique jardin anglais coupé de lacs et de canaux. C’est le Hyde Park de Bucarest, qui a près de là, son avenue de Champs Elysée, rendez-vous de tous les innombrables équipages de la noblesse valaque”²². Another French journalist

²¹ James Henry Skene, *The Frontier Lands of the Christian and the Turk; Comprising Travels in the Regions of the Lower Danube in 1850 and 1851*, London, 1853, vol. I, p. 335–337.

²² Eugène Jouve, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

Ulysse de Marsillac, who settled in Bucharest in 1852, was a keen observer of the evolution of the capital city. In his periodical *La Voix de la Roumanie* he made, in 1861, a description, half ironic half serious, of the garden: “Au centre de la ville, sur l’emplacement d’un ancien marais, on a planté le jardin de Cismegiu. (...) Le jardin de Cismegiu est un parc; qui serait délicieux en Été et plus encore en Automne si le lac qui est au milieu pouvait être un peu nettoyé. Si, au lieu de cette immense flaque d’eau putride, nous avions une nappe limpide et pure, je vous assure que peu de promenades en Europe seraient plus agréables que le jardin de Cismegiu. Pendant les soirs d’Été, la musique des régiments vient s’y faire entendre; mais elle n’a pu encore parvenir à étouffer les chants criards des laoutari, musiciens bohémiens. (...) J’incline à croire que cette musique un peu sauvage a besoin d’un cadre qui lui aille, et que ses sons se marient mal avec les frôlements des crinolines. J’ai nommé les crinolines! Hélas! Trois fois hélas! Le jardin de Cismegiu est leur paradis, leur purgatoire et leur enfer”²³. A few years later things got improved and Marsillac praised the park: “Le lac se déroule vert comme une émeraude entre ses berges de gazon, taché çà et là par les grandes ailes des cygnes, et par quelques embarcations où se jouent des matelots aux chemises bleues”²⁴. Kohn-Abrest was enthusiastic about this garden which has no rival in its beauty and variety, in spite of the fact that the inhabitants seemed unaware of its value and neglected or ignored it: “Dès le matin je m’échappai de mon gît pour aller humer l’air très-embaumé de Cismé-Ju (sic). Je ne sais quel autre jardin pourrait, à mon humble avis, lutter avec ce parc où les ombrages sont si frais, la flora si variée; les Bukarestiens paraissent se soucier assez médiocrement de cette merveille qu’ils possèdent; l’entretien du Cismé-Ju laisse à désirer, l’éclairage est nul et on n’y rencontre guère que des passants”²⁵. In June 1887, when Mrs. Walker spent a few days in Bucharest, she enjoyed a walk in that garden and, besides its aesthetic arrangement, she observed that both mature people and children found amusements there: “The gardens of the Cismégîu, at the extremity of the Boulevard Elizabeth, are extensive and well laid out; the ornamental pieces of water, now no longer stagnant as formerly, are delightfully refreshing after the dusty roads. A charity fair was being held under the fine trees of the avenue; bands of music in different parts, some military, some by the celebrated gipsy performers – the Tsiganes. Cows were standing to be milked under the shade, and a miniature railway (ignominiously drawn by a rather restive donkey) gave great delight to the children”²⁶. During the cold season, the lake was used for skating: “The lake – noted J. W. Ozanne in 1878 – does come in usefully in winter, when it is the resort of the skaters, whose evolutions are always watched with interest by a large and gaping crowd”²⁷.

To take a general view of the garden and its neighbourhood, Ludwig Angerer had to climb on top of the Grand Theatre (the future National Theatre), another newly-built architectural jewel of the capital, dedicated on 31 December 1852 (Fig. 7).

The desolate borders of the winding Dâmbovița, the muddy rivulet which divided the Wallachian capital and flooded almost every spring, was also pictured by the Austrian chemist turned photographer. He captured the great contrasts between the tanners’ workshops and shanties flanking the stream and the imposing public buildings which have just been erected in the neighborhood. (Fig. 8) Nevertheless, Ludwig Angerer is best remembered for portraying artisans, traders and folk types, as he is one of the first ethnophotographers to document the Romanian lands and its people²⁸.

²³ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Promenades en Roumanie. Bucarest II*, in *La Voix de la Roumanie*, no. 36/11 Octobre/28 Septembre 1861.

²⁴ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Cismegiu et la Chaussée*, in *La Voix de la Roumanie*, no. 33/6 Juillet 1865.

²⁵ Fr. Kohn-Abrest, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

²⁶ Mrs. [Mary Adelaide] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

²⁷ J. W. Ozanne, *Three Years in Roumania*, London, 1878, p. 17.

²⁸ Anton Holzer, *Im Schatten des Krimkrieges. Ludwig Angerer Fotoexpedition nach Bukarest (1854 bis 1856). Eine wiederentdeckte Fotoserie im Bildarchiv der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek*, in *Fotogeschichte* 93/2004, p. 23–50; idem, *În umbra Războiului Crimeii. Expediția fotografică a lui Ludwig Angerer la București (1854–1856). O serie de fotografii redescoperite la Cabinetul de Stampe al Bibliotecii Naționale Austriece*, in Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (editor), *Războiul Crimeii – 150 de ani de la încheiere*, Brăila, 2006, p. 239–266; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Early Portrait and Genre Photography in Romania*, in *History of Photography* 13, no. 4/1989, p. 279; idem, *Inceputurile fotografiei etnografice în România* (The Beginning of Ethnophotography in Romania), in *Revista Muzeelor*, no. 1/1991, p. 51–62; idem, *Fotografie und Folklore. Zur Etnofotografie im Rumänien des 19. Jahrhunderts*, in *Fotogeschichte*, no. 103/2007, p. 47.

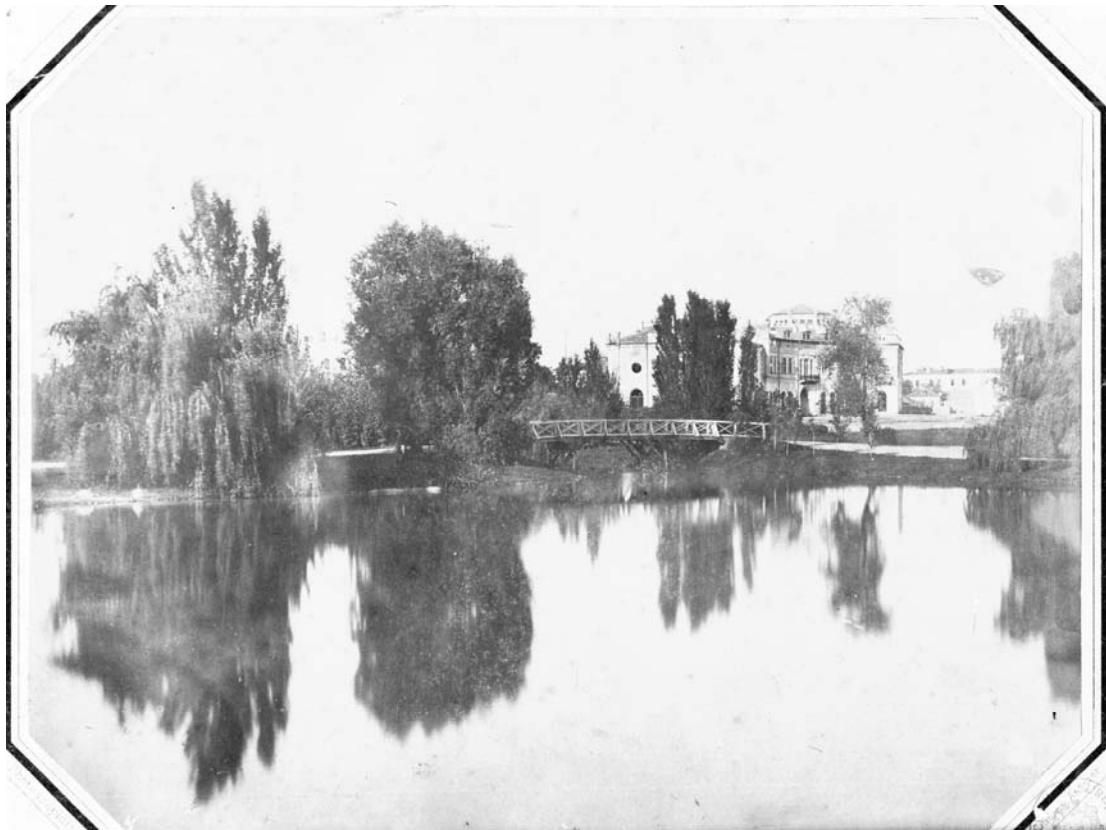


Fig. 5. Ludwig Angerer, The Cișmigiu Garden, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.

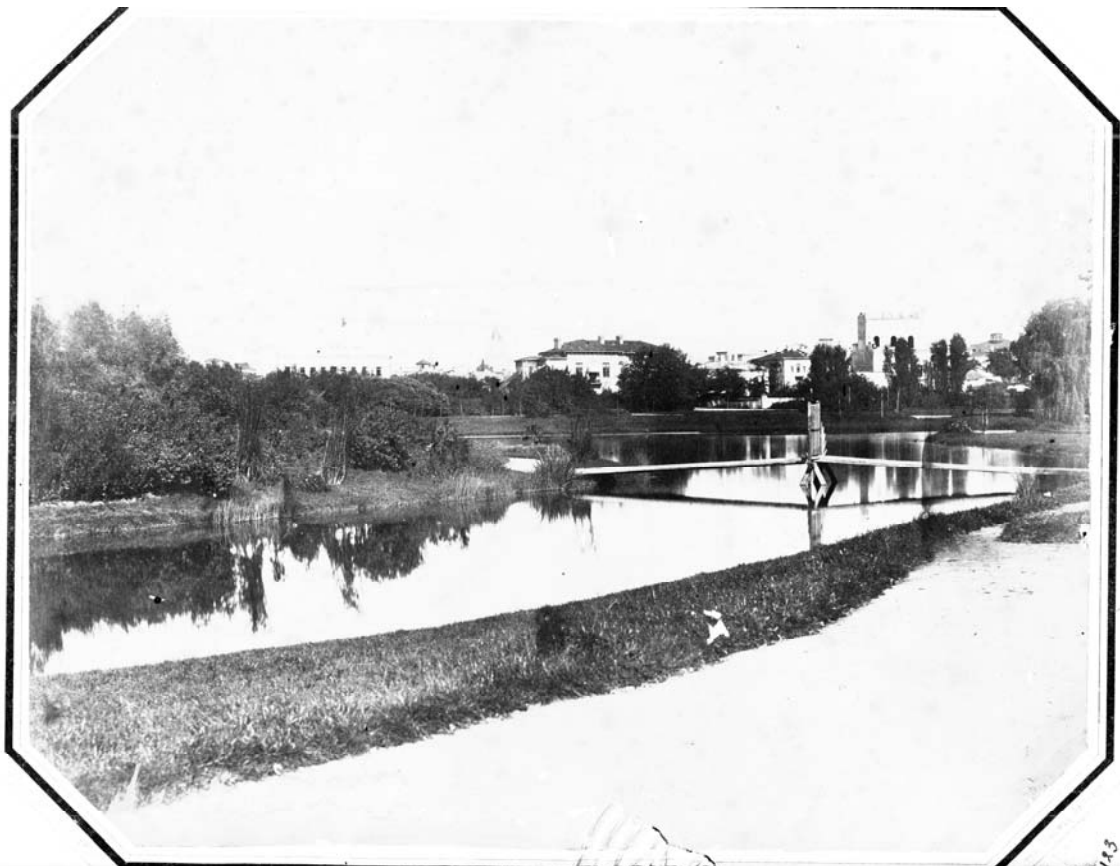


Fig. 6. Ludwig Angerer, The Cișmigiu Garden, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.



Fig. 7. Ludwig Angerer, General view of the Cismigiu Garden and its neighborhood taken from the roof of the Grand Theatre, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.



Fig. 8. Ludwig Angerer, The borders of the Dâmbovița River, salted print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

When Angerer left Wallachia, another Bucharest based photographer developed an interest for its architecture and cityscapes²⁹, **Carol Szathmari** (1812–1887). Szathmari was already a name in the European photography due to the pictures he took during the first stages of the Crimean War. But by 1853–1854, when it was waged on the borders of the Danube, that war became just another battle to settle the still unsolved Oriental Question; only that time the actors were the Russian and the Ottoman Empires. By April 1854, Szathmari, who already had a studio in Bucharest, filled a van with his cameras, chemicals and glass plates and went to the battlefield. He took pictures at Oltenitza of both parties and later that year gathered his collection into an elegant album which, in 1855, was exhibited to great acclaim to the Paris Exposition Universelle. Thus, he was *the* first known war photographer in the world³⁰.

Already at the crossroad between the documentary and the art, Szathmari was also a skilled water colourist and engraver who would later travel extensively to sketch folk costumes and the traditional peasant life. Szathmari also developed a taste for old architecture and for documenting the fast changing image of the capital city. In September 1859, when he exhibited for the first time at the Société Française de Photographie in Paris, he offered a print on waxed canvas with the courtyard of the Manuk Inn in Bucharest³¹. (Fig. 9)



Fig. 9. Carol Szathmari, The Manuk Inn, panotype after a wet collodion negative, Société Française de Photographie, Paris.

²⁹ Ruxanda Beldiman, *Arhitectură civilă și ecleziastică în fotografia lui Carol Pop de Szthmari*, in Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (editor), *Szathmari pionier al fotografiei și contemporanii săi*, București, 2014, p. 65–70.

³⁰ C. Săvulescu, *The First War Photographic Reportage*, in *Image* 1, March 1973, p. 13–16; idem, *The First War Correspondent – Carol Szathmari*, in *Interpressgrafik*, no. 1/1978, p. 25–29; Constantin Săvulescu, *Cronologia ilustrată a fotografiei în România, perioada 1834–1916* (The Illustrated Chronology of Romanian Photography, 1834–1916), Asociația Artiștilor Fotografi, București, 1985, p. 19–27; C. Săvulescu, *Carol Szathmari – Primul reporter fotograf de război* (Carol Szathmari – The First War Photographer), în *Fotografia*, no. 190/Julie – August 1989, p. 2–3; Lawrence James, *Crimea 1854–56, The War with Russia from Contemporary Photographs*, Hayes Kennedy, Oxford, 1981, p. 9–11; Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Early Portrait and Genre Photography in Romania*, in *History of Photography* 13, no. 4/Oktober – Dezember 1989, p. 285; idem, “Photographs from the Crimean War by Carol Szathmari in American and British Collections”, in *Muzeul Național*, X, (1998), 71–82; idem, *Cruce și semilună* (Cross and Crescent), București, 2001, p. 159; idem, *Szathmari: From a War Photographer to a Ruling Prince’s Court Painter and Photographers*, in Anna Auer, Uwe Schögl (editors), *Jubilee – 30 Years ESHPh Congress of Photography in Vienna*, Fotohof Edition, Vienna, 2008, p. 80–89; idem, *Carol Szathmari (1812–1887): Pioneer War Photographer During the Danubian War Campaign*, in *Centropa*, no. 1/January 2009, p. 4–16; idem, *Szathmari la bicentenar* (Szathmari’s Bicentenary), in SCIA, *Artă plastică, Serie nouă*, Tom 2 (46)/2012, p. 35–37.

³¹ Pierre Marc Richard, *La Société Française de Photographie, Index 1854–1876*, Paris, 1990, p. 107.

James O. Noyes had listed that inn as one of the most interesting edifices of the capital city: "The only buildings in Bukarest worthy of particular mention, are the Khan of Manouk Bey, the Hospice of Brancovan and the Hospital of Coltsa with its curious tower built in 1715 by the soldiers of Charles XII, but now falling in ruins"³². Auguste Lancelot was also fascinated by that large inn and made a detail description of it: "Rien n'inspire mieux l'idée d'une vie paisible et heureuse que la vue de ces charmantes habitations. Rien n'en éloigne plus qu'une visite à l'ancien khan, fondé par Manuk-bey, et devenu dans ces derniers temps l'hôtel Manuk. C'est, malgré son titre aristocratique, une auberge où les gens aux nerfs délicats, à l'épiderme sensible, feront bien de ne pas s'aventurer, mais où les curieux d'anciennes moeurs locales seront satisfaits. Il a gardé intacte sa première physionomie, attristée malheureusement par la malpropreté. Les deux rangs de galeries qui relient ses quatre grands corps de logis, le grand escalier à double rampe qui dessert les deux étages, très élégant, sous un kiosque à toiture saillante et à solives profilées, sont ornés de colonnes et de balustrades d'un goût charmant et d'une exécution très fine. On pourrait dire que c'est un palais de bois; il mériterait une restauration, peu difficile du reste, et une destination plus protectrice. Tel qu'il est, c'est le rendez-vous des rouliers transylvains, des colporteurs allemands, des petits trafiquants turcs, bulgares et grecs, de tous les voyageurs à petite bourse et aussi à métiers de hasard, et qui craignent le grand jour. Sur le grand escalier, sous les longues galeries, se condaoient les types les plus divers, les costumes les plus variés. (...) Les galeries, sur lesquelles ouvrent les appartements, servent de promenoirs et de salles communes. Il y règne une indifférence et un sans gêne remarquable à l'égard du voisin. Sous l'oeil de tous (tolérance qui ne fait l'éloge de personne), chacun y semble chez soi. Du point où je m'installai pour prendre mes croquis, je pouvais voir une blonde Allemande qui savonnait des hardes de première nécessité que ses enfants attendaient; un barbier ambulancier rasant des mentons et des occiputs; une tzigane dansant devant des Turcs en belle humeur; un saltimbanque en maillot déteint faisant la leçon à un singe pelé. En même temps, les sons d'une kobsa accompagnant une voix mélancolique et douce, filtraient à travers l'entre-bâillement d'une porte placée derrière moi, et du fond d'un corridor obscur, m'arrivaient les plaintifs vagissements d'un nouveau-né. L'immense cour me donnait le spectacle le plus divertissant et le plus varié du monde: un campement, un entrepôt, un marché, une bourse, une ménagerie tout à la fois; au long des rez-de-chaussée, des bâches, des tentes, des ballots de marchandises, des tonneaux; au fond, dans de grandes niches grillées, des amas de cuirs frais, de laines suintantes, de cornes de buffles disséminées partout, des tas de paille et de fumier; sans ce milieu sans ordre, un va-et-vient continu de birdjas, de paysans à cheval, de chevaux dételés qui hennissaient et ruaient, de chiens qui hurlaient, et de grands porcs bruns qui grognaient d'aise, en fouillant à plein grouin le large fleuve d'eau grasse s'épanchant sans interruption de la cuisine. Ce mouvement, ce bruit ne troublaient pas un instant les Turcs, les Valaques, les Bulgares, les Grecs, qui continuaient, tranquilles, le débat de leurs transactions, auxquelles présidaient des juifs, opérant sur place le change des monnaies, à grand renfort de lunettes, de pierres de touche et de balances. Le khan déchu est situé dans un quartier très fréquenté; il a une façade sur la rivière la Dimbovitza"³³.

On 16 October 1863, Szathmari was showered with honours and became the Court Painter and Photographer for Alexandru Ioan I, Ruling Prince of the United Romanian Principalities. That very year he offered an album to Princess Helen, wife of the Ruling Prince. Elegantly bound, the album have a hand written title and dedication on the front page: *Souvenir de la Roumanie, dédié à son Altesse Sérénissime Hélène, Princesse Régente de la Roumanie, par Charles Pop de Szathmari, Peintre et Photographe de la Cour de Son Altesse Sérénissime le Prince Régent*³⁴. (Fig. 10) Along many peasants, folk types and artisans, which constitutes the main topic of the carte-de-visite pictures, the album contains also two general views of Bucharest, taken from almost the same place like Angere's, respectively the Spirea Hill (Fig. 11) and the Metropolitan Hill.

The second one is a real panorama for which he used five plates to cover an angle of 180 degrees. Szathmari identified each monument in the picture by numbering and labeling them on the edge of the image (Fig. 12). Besides these two general views there were individual takes of the Metropolitan Church (Fig. 13), the St. George Church, the tiny Bucur Church near the Radu Vodă Monastery (Fig. 14), three views of the Stavropoleos Monastery taken from different angles (Fig. 15), a general view of the Cernica Monastery with

³² James O. Noyes, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

³³ D. A. Lancelot, *op. cit.*, p. 206–207.

³⁴ Theodor Enescu, *Un album de fotografii al lui Carol Popp de Szathmari cu vederi din București* (A Photographic Album by Carol Popp de Szathmari with Views from Bucharest), in *Studii și Cercetări de Bibliologie*, I, 1955, p. 291–299.

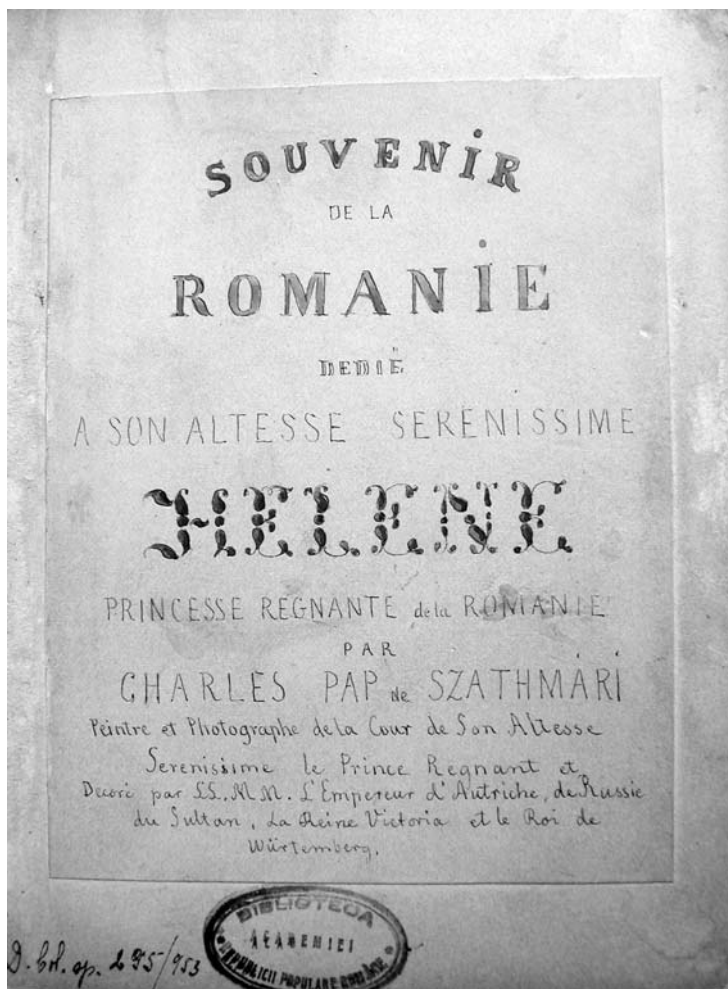


Fig. 10. Carol Szathmari, Title page of the album *Souvenir de la Roumanie*, black ink and water colour on paper, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 11. Carol Szathmari, Bucharest general view taken from the Spirea Hill, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 12. Carol Szathmari, Bucharest general view taken from the Metropolitan Hill, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 13. Carol Szathmari, The Metropolitan Palace with its chapel, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 14. Carol Szathmari, The Bucur Church and Radu Vodă Monastery, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 15. Carol Szathmari, The Stavropoleos Church, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

the lake in the foreground and two images from the inside, the Manuk Inn with its oriental flavor (Fig. 16) and the 24 January Market on a fair day (Fig. 17). The collection was completed with pictures taken at the “Moși”³⁵, the most important commercial fair of the year (Figs. 18, 19). This spring fair was a great attraction for everybody, either peasant or town folk. Dick de Lonlay, a French special artist for *Le Monde Illustré* who came to document the war of 1877 was deeply impressed by this great yearly event: “De tous côtés les voitures, conduites par leurs cochers lipovanes, au costume russe, et les tramways amènent les habitants à la vaste foire de la Moche, qui a lieu à l’entrée du faubourg Est de Bukarest. Rien de plus pittoresque et de plus typique que cette immense cohue, dont la foire de Saint-Cloud ne saurait donner aucune idée. A la Moche sont exposés tous les produits nationaux dans de vastes rues distinctes formées par l’alignement des charriots qui les ont apportés. D’un côté sont étalées les opankis ou sandales en peau de boeuf garnies de lanières et dont le dessus est tressé en cordes. Tout contre, sont mis en vente d’immenses chaudrons en cuivre rouge non étamé et encore tout bosselé de coups de marteau, magnifique de forme, et de cette couleur que l’on ne rencontre que chez les vieux cuivres hollandais. Non loin de là est établie une industrie bien curieuse: c’est la cente de croix en bois peint pour les cimetières. Les parents et amis viennent acheter et commander ces ornements funèbres qu’ils emportent pour orner la tombe de ceux qu’ils ont perdus. Ces croix, de forme bizarre et fantastique, sont taillées grossièrement en bois blanc et fabriquées sur place. (...) De l’autre côté de la foire se trouve la rue de la Poterie, où sont étalés à terre de vastes amphores et des plats en terre vernissée à fond brun, ornés de dessins rouges et jaunes. On y trouve également de petits sifflets en terre peinte, humbles jouets que les paysans achètent pour leurs enfants, et où sont naïvement représentés des cavaliers coiffés de casque à cimier roumain ou de bonnets de Cosaque. A côté de ces

³⁵ “Moși” was a term with which the Romanians called the dead of their families. Each year, in spring, it was a great commemoration festival for the dead and, after special religious ceremonies, it was organized a great fair where peasants and merchants from all over the country came to Bucharest to trade their products.



Fig. 16. Carol Szathmari, The Manuk Inn, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

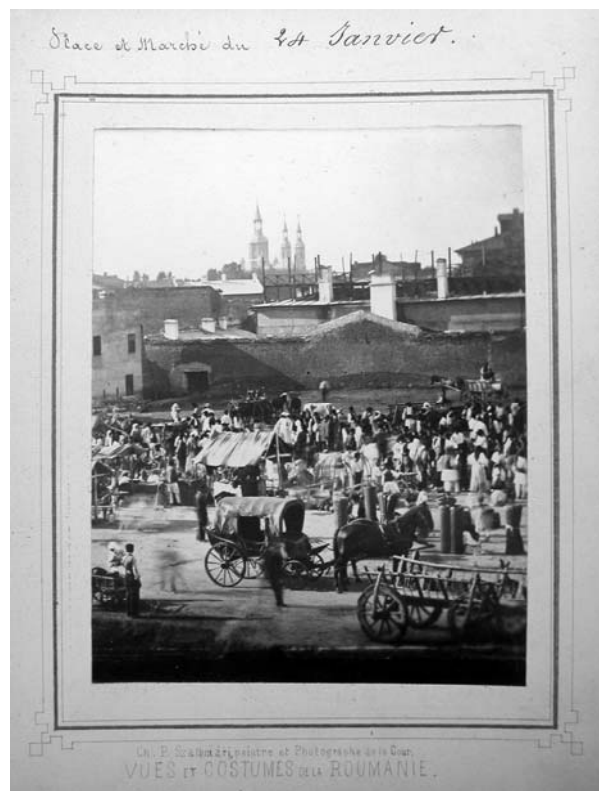


Fig. 17. Carol Szathmari, The 24 January Market, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 18. Carol Szathmari, The Moși Fair – the place prepared and decorated for the ruling prince's visit, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 19. Carol Szathmari, The Moși Fair – the main mercantile street, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 20. Carol Szathmari, The University (then called the Academy Palace), albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

poteries se vendent également de vastes pots en bois munis de couvercles, couverts d'arabesques obtenues en y passant un fer rouge et fabriqués dans les Karpathes. Plus loin se trouve la ruelle dite de Réjouissance, toute bordée de cabarets construits en troncs d'arbres garnis de roseaux, et où, aux sons de la flûte en bois blanc, les paysans viennent boire le mastic et danser la *hora*³⁶.

Bucharest was a city of many churches and monasteries. "There are so many churches at Bucharest" – stated James Henry Skene in 1853 – "that the devout may pray in a different one every day of the year, even if it be a leap-year; for they number no less than 366. Few of them, however, merit notice"³⁷. Being unaccustomed with the style of the Greek-Orthodox churches and unacquainted with its rites Skene was too harsh in his criticism. Marsillac, who spent half of his life among Romanians, and had a better understanding for their religion, made a correct description of the Metropolitan church: "A l'extrémité de ce vallon délicieux, se dressent sur un mamelon les hautes flèches de l'église métropolitaine. C'est un imposant édifice dans lequel l'architecte a heureusement marié les ornements sévères de l'art byzantin et les grâces un peu plus frivoles du style ogival. Un quadruple allée de tilleuls conduit au porche de l'église et protège de son ombre les promeneurs"³⁸.

³⁶ Dick de Lonlay, *En Bulgarie 1877–1878. Souvenirs de guerre et de voyage*, Paris, 1883, p. 63–66.

³⁷ James Henry Skene, *op. cit.*, vol. I, p. 335.

³⁸ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Bucharest en 1973*, in *Le Journal de Bucharest*, no. 283/18 Mai 1873.

The city was pleasantly positioned among beautiful hills and offered a nice panorama to the explorer heading for it. J. W. Ozanne depicts it as a colorful place, worth to be visited in spite or because of the great contrasts between splendour and abject poverty: “The position of the town is somewhat peculiar, for though placed in the midst of a plain of broad expanse, it is surrounded on nearly every side by low hills, which, while they screen it pleasantly in winter from the blasts which sweep down upon it from the frozen steppes of Russia and from the cold Black Sea, render it a perfect oven in the months of July and August, when the temperature is almost tropical. To see Bucharest as it should be seen, the spectator should climb one of the hills on the south side of the city, and look carefully into it from the top. The view is then most charming, for the metal plates which cover the domes of the hundred churches which it contains, reflecting the dazzling rays of the brilliant sun, produce an effect which may well be described as splendid. In the month of May, when the lovely gardens with which the town abounds are bedecked with verdant foliage and graceful flowers, the sight is unusually pleasant. A nearer acquaintance proves, however, somewhat disappointing. Lines upon lines of dirty streets fringed with shabby houses, cottages, and hovels, relieved only here and there by the mansion of some great boyar, do much toward removing the favorable impression already formed. It is not therefore until the centre of the town is reached, that the traveler perceives anything which reminds him of the home he has left”³⁹.

In 1864, Szathmari climbed on top of Colțea Tower to take new panoramic views with a much larger camera. He then posed the Soutzo Palace in the foreground and the Colțea Tower which was still the tallest building in the town and the imposing newly-built University (Fig. 20). Another image heads south, following the then called Colțea Lane, with shops on each side.

A few years later, in 1867, Szathmari completed a large size album called *Episcopia de Curtea de Argeș* (The Episcopalian Church of Curtea de Argeș) which was dedicated to the new ruling prince, Carol I of Hohenzollern-Siegmaringen. That church was the most beautiful medieval monument in the whole Wallachia and the intention of the authorities was to restore it. The photographer took general views and details to produce a comprehensive documentation. His pictures preserved the real façade of the church for, a few years later, it was to be completely demolished and rebuilt on the same base and with the same ornaments. The project and its supervision went to the French architect André Lecomte du Nouÿ, one of Viollet-le-Duc’s disciples. Szathmari was awarded a honorary mention for his *Episcopia de Curtea de Argeș* album at the 1867 Paris Exposition Universelle⁴⁰.

In 1869, Szathmari completed another large size album called *România* which contained photographic images of Bucharest and the countryside taken between 1867 and 1869⁴¹. (Fig. 21) Besides churches and monasteries he included a few group portraits of monks, peasants and officials awaiting the Ruling Prince’s visit. There were also some views taken at the Șosea – the fashionable promenade of the city (Fig. 22) – brilliantly described in all its finery in a Sunday morning by Kohn-Abrest, one of the war correspondents of 1877: “Le dimanche de 25 juin, il y avait foule à la promenade de la chaussée, à Bukarest. Les calèches particulières et les *droshkis* de louage faisaient queue absolument comme les véhicules de nos élégantes autour du lac au bois de Boulogne. Le restaurant de *Serestreo* [Herăstrău] pittoresquement enfoui dans un massif de verdure, avec les tables groupées, un bel étang aux eaux bleues, dans lequel on peut pêcher soi-même le poisson destiné au déjeuner ou au dîner, était encombré d’officiers russes en partie fine avec les nymphes, rapidement devenues leurs compagnonnes habituelles. Au rond-point qui termine la promenade et d’où se déploie le long ruban de la grande route de Plojesti, des paysans en costume valaque exécutaient sous les yeux des promeneurs, qui faisaient arrêter leurs voitures, des danses bizarres mêlées à des exercices de bâton du plus singulier effet [Călușari]”⁴².

Other pictures in that album showed Azilul Elena Doamna (Princess Helen Orphanage), a modern, well-provided home for orphan girls founded by Prince Alexandru Ioan’s wife and administered by Carol Davila, the head of the Medical Corps of the Army and his wife, Ana Davila (Fig. 23). There, the photographer witnessed the celebration of Romania’s National Day with the little girls neatly clad in white

³⁹ J. W. Ozanne, *op. cit.*, p. 12–13.

⁴⁰ Laurențiu Vlad, *Imagini ale identității naționale. România la Expozițiile Universale de la Paris, 1867–1937*, 2001, p. 175.

⁴¹ Adriana-Natalia Bangălă, *Albumele România de Carol Popp de Szathmari în colecțiile Bibliotecii Academiei Române, ale Muzeului Național de Artă al României, ale Institutului de Istoria Artei “G. Oprescu” și ale Bibliotecii Centrale Universitare din Iași, cu asemănările și deosebiri lor*, in Adrian-Silvan Ionescu (editor), *Szathmari pionier al fotografiei și contemporanii săi*, București, 2014, p. 258–282.

⁴² F. Kohn-Abrest, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

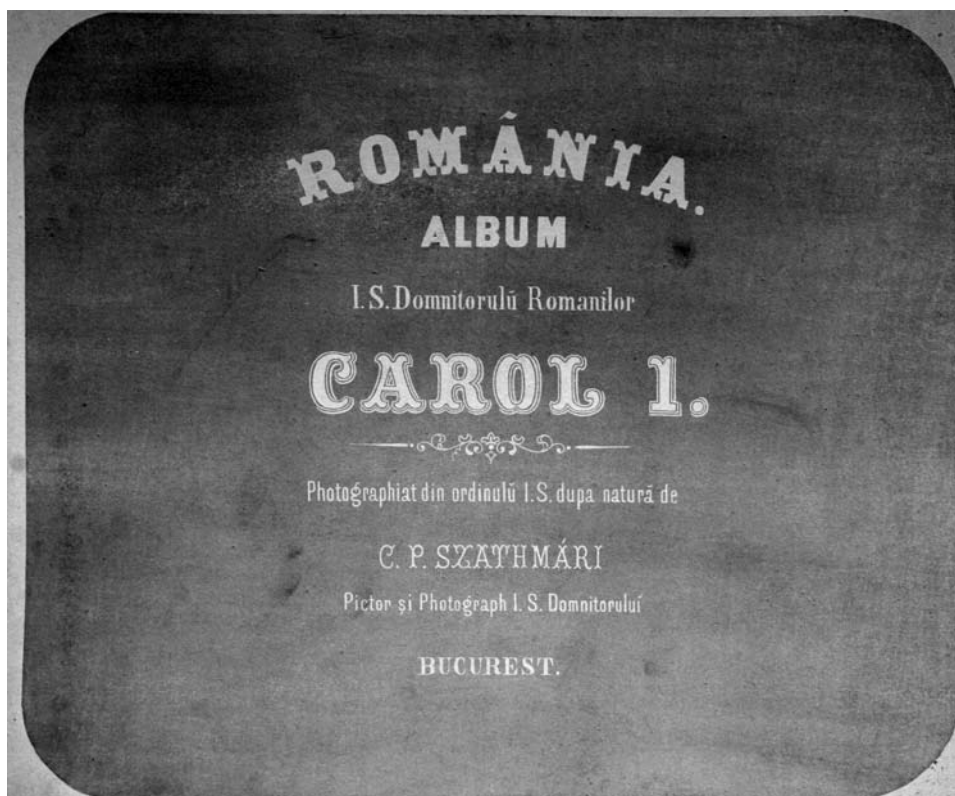


Fig. 21. Carol Szathmari, Title page of *The Romania Album*, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, "G. Oprescu" Institute of Art History.



Fig. 22. Carol Szathmari, *Chaussée*, in *The Romania Album*, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, "G. Oprescu" Institute of Art History.



Fig. 23. Carol Szathmari, Azilul Elena Doamna (Princess Helen Orphanage), in *The Romania Album*, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, “G. Oprescu” Institute of Art History.

on one side of a long table set for feasting and civilian and military officials in formal attire on the other side (Fig. 24). Another event worth of Szathmari's lenses was the celebration of Prince Carol's enthronement on 10th of May 1866 which became the national day since then. Even though not quite a snapshot, the picture is full of vividness, with a group of elegant ladies in the foreground looking down towards a crowd enjoying the pageant (Fig. 25). The artist took lots of pictures on the streets of Bucharest but did not included all of them in his albums. Somewhere used as means of inspiration for his lithographs. Others were sold as independent proofs. An image depicting the borders of Dâmbovița River with *sacagii* (water vendors) busily filling their tubs with muddy, unhealthy waters (Fig. 26), reminds the iconic picture taken by Angerer a few years before. Nothing changed for more than a decade in that area where there were based the butchers and the tanners of the town. Ulysse de Marsillac was idyllic when describing those water sellers: “Les *sacagi* ou porteurs d'eau sont de vigoureux gaillards, vêtus d'une chemise flottante et d'un pantalon de toile retroussé jusqu'à mi-cuisse. Leur tonneau est porté sur deux roues et traîné par un de ces chevaux-fantômes qui rappellent les chevaux des *corricoli* de Naples, dont Alexandre Dumas nous a fait l'amusante description. Sur une planche posée en travers du brancard se juche le *sacagiou*, plus fier qu'un empereur romain. Il jette de temps à autre un cri que l'on pourrait exprimer ainsi *apoh!* C'est *apa*, eau, qu'il veut dire. Faites-le appeler par votre ménagère et pour quelques sous vous aurez un tonneau d'eau vaseuse que vous devrez soigneusement filtrer”⁴³. Auguste Lancelot expressed his disgust for that poor, uncared neighborhood bording the rivulet: “C'est peut-être vrai, mais ce qu'on en voit de là ne donne guère envie d'en boire. En amont d'un gué très-fréquenté, et tout près de ces eaux troubles, se dressent, infectes et hideuses, les anciennes boucheries turques. Entre des charpantes, sinistres comme des gibets et tout éclaboussées de rouge, des quartiers de boeufs et de moutons, maladroitement déchirés, pendent à des chaînes de fer; des têtes de moutons velues, aux yeux rentrés dans leur orbites verdis, serrant dans leurs dents ternies leur langue enflée, encombrant, avec d'autres lambeaux sans formes, des étals massifs tout gluants de sang, sous lesquels rôdent de

⁴³ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Bucarest III*, in *La Voix de la Roumanie*, no. 37/5/17 Octobre 1861.

nombreux chiens affamés et sans maître”⁴⁴. More than this, on hot days there were even bathers of both sexes who enjoyed the cooler but muddy waves of the rivulet which crossed the Capital city. Marsillac wrote: “Je ne veux pas quitter la Dâmbovitza sans vous parler des bains que l’on y prend pendant l’Été. (...) Ce qui frappe tout d’abord l’étranger qui assiste à ces exercices nautiques, c’est l’absence complète de pudeur qui caractérise les baigneurs des deux sexes. Dans la partie de la rivière qui coule sous les arbres, au milieu des bosquets et des jardins, l’ombre et la verdure font une sorte de vêtement aux nageurs, mais en pleine rue, sous les yeux des passants qui vont et viennent sans cesse sur les ponts, on s’étonne de voir des hommes et des femmes dans le costume d’Adam et d’Eve, avant la feuille de vigne, s’ébattre sans le moindre sentiment qu’ils font là une chose inouïe dans un pays civilisé. Il y a bien des laideurs vulgaires qui punissent la curiosité indiscrete du passant, mais il y a aussi bien des fraîches et charmantes apparitions qui le clouent d’admiration sur la place”⁴⁵.



Fig. 24. Carol Szathmari, Celebration of the 10th of May, the National Day, at the Princess Helen Orphanage, in *The Romania Album*, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, “G. Oprescu” Institute of Art History.



Fig. 25. Carol Szathmari, The great celebration at the anniversary of Prince Carol’s enthronement, in *The Romania Album*, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, “G. Oprescu” Institute of Art History.



Fig. 26. Carol Szathmari, Dâmbovița River and water sellers filling their barrels, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

⁴⁴ D. A. Lancelot, *op. cit.*, p. 207.

⁴⁵ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Causerie*, in *La Voix de la Roumanie*, no. 37/5/17 Octobre 1861.

Opposing such distressing images there were those taken downtown, with the exquisite shops and hotels on Calea Victoriei, such as the workshops of the jeweller Josef Resch or that of the French milliner of great local fame Victorine Jobin who borrowed her name for good to the top hat worn by the smart ones or the expensive and exclusive Hotel Hugues facing the National Theatre (Fig. 27). Being a Frenchman as was the owner himself, Marsillac made a flamboyant description of that hotel: “Faute d’hospitalité gratuite, il faut donc recourir à l’hospitalité payée. Les étrangers y ont pourvu. Eux seuls tiennent des hôtels. Le premier de tous est l’Hôtel Hugues. (...) Hugues est Français et je ne vois pas pourquoi je ne dirais pas d’un Français tout le bien qu’il mérite. L’hôtel Hugues est situé sur le place du théâtre au centre de la capitale, dans une position magnifique. Une longue file de voitures stationne devant sa porte. (...) Si je faisais un prospectus, je vous dirais que les appartements sont élégants et confortables, le service actif, la cuisine excellente, les vins exquis et les prix modérés. Mais je ne fais pas de prospectus. Dieu vous garde seulement des calembourgs de M. Hugues!”⁴⁶ Another picture was taken at the corner of the newly-cut boulevard showing the imposing four-story building of Hotel Herdan (future Grand Hotel du Boulevard) where it was opened the first Exhibition of the Society of the Friends of Fine Arts in early 1873 – an event where Szathmari exhibited some of his best water colours⁴⁷. On the other side of the hotel Szathmari himself had, for a while, his photographic studio on which windows there were displayed large portraits of the European kings and emperors (Fig. 28). It was at Grand Hotel that some journalists who came in a too crowded Bucharest in 1877, in search of news for their publications, found at least accommodation. One of them described its comfortability and elegance but complained about its high prices: “Enfin, après avoir cherché inutilement à nous loger à l’hôtel Broft, à l’hôtel Hugues, nous arrivons à trouver l’hospitalité au *grand hôtel du Boulevard*, établissement aussi colossal que magnifique où nous rencontrons le confort des hôtels suisses. Par exemple, les prix sont incroyables. Une modeste chambre se loue 12 francs par jour. Il faut être un nabab pour se permettre le luxe d’un appartement au *grand hôtel du Boulevard*. Le déjeuner est bon, décidément la cuisine roumaine mérite d’être classée, moins les plats roumaino-hongrois fortement pimentés qui s’adressent à des estomacs moins délicats qu’un estomac parisien. Oh! Ce piment! Une carafe d’eau de la Dambovitza n’éteint pas le feu qui nous dévore. (...) La salle à manger bien décorée et très propre, moins le linge qu’on ne change pas assez souvent, est une vraie Babel où l’on parle toutes les langues du monde”⁴⁸.



Fig. 27. Carol Szathmari, Podul Mogoșoaiei in front of the Grand Theatre, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

⁴⁶ Idem, *Promenades en Roumanie. Bucarest I*, in *La Voix de la Roumanie*, no. 35/3 Octobre/21 Septembre 1861.

⁴⁷ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Mișcarea artistică oficială în România secolului al XIX-lea*, București, 2008, p. 151–158.

⁴⁸ A. Mlochowski de Belina, *De Paris a Plevna. Journal d’un journaliste. De Mai à Décembre 1877*, Paris (1878), p. 31–32.



Fig. 28. Carol Szathmari, Grand Hotel du Boulevard – Szathmari’s photographic studio on the far left, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

Szathmari was not the only photographer to document the capital city and the old monuments of the country. **Franz Duschek** (1830–1884), a Czech photographer who settled in Bucharest in 1852, produced an album with images taken at the elegant summer residence of the Oteteleşanu family at Măgurele, nearby Bucharest. It was one of the most beautiful manor houses built in the early 1850s. The album, produced in 1860, was entitled *Vues de Magourel*, and showed both the house and its glowing garden (Figs. 29, 30). Almost twenty years apart from Talbot’s landscapes taken on his estate at Lacock Abbey, and probably without knowing the calotype experiments done by the father of modern photography⁴⁹, Duschek made some masterly compositions with the exotic plants in the garden and the pond with its China bridge arching over the waters (Figs. 31, 32). Unable to take snapshots the photographer managed to simulate them by adding some birds flying over the park which he drew in black ink.

He took also some very interesting cityscapes of the Capital probably with the intention to bind the proofs in an album which he never completed. As did his friend and colleague some years before, Duschek climbed the Colţea Tower and took a picture with the University where is seen also the roof of the Soutzo Palace (Fig. 33). The University – which, in 1870s housed also the Romanian Academy and was more often identified with that scholarly institution – was one of the largest and most imposing buildings in Bucharest. “The Academy,” said Florence Berger, “one of the latest and best of these edifices, built of stone, in a simple and solid style of architecture, is a great improvement upon the unsymmetrical and heterogeneous structures that abound in the city. It contains an embryo library and a museum yet in its infancy. There are also classes organized within its walls, which is a step in the right direction”⁵⁰. At that time, the University Palace housed some scientific and artistic institutions such as the already mentioned Academy, its library, the School of Fine Arts, founded in 1864, its paintings gallery called *Pinacothèque* (the future National Museum of Art), the National Museum (i.e. museum of history and archaeology) and the Museum of Natural History. Ozanne also admired this building and its

⁴⁹ Larry J. Schaaf, *The Photographic Art of William Henry Fox Talbot*, Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford, 2000, p. 88–89, 110–111.

⁵⁰ Florence K. Berger, *A Winter in the City of Pleasure or Life on the Lower Danube*, Richard Bentley and Son, London, 1877, p. 47.

collections: “At right angle, however, to the Podu Mogoşoi runs a formidable rival in the shape of the Grand Boulevard. This fine piece of ground contains the University and the Museum, which last possesses a library of 27,000 volumes”⁵¹. After Anatole de Demidoff, in 1837, Mary Adelaide Walker was one of the few foreign travellers who visited the National Museum. In 1887 the Treasure of Pietroasa was still a great attraction and, after being bored by her long waiting for the opening hour and after an unguided roaming in venues filled with uninteresting exhibits such as minerals and stuffed animals, she felt rewarded when she came upon the hoard or rather the Henri Trenk water colours depicting it and some replicas because the original was stored in a vault after it was stolen in 1875 and recuperated afterwards. Walker had a lot of complaints about the neglected aspect of the building, about the indolent attendants and felt frustrated at the lack of any labels for the metope of the Adam Clisi monument exhibited outside the museum but, in the end, she enjoyed her visit: “The Museum occupies the left-hand wing of the building of the Academy. It opens at eleven o’clock, to close again at one – a very bad arrangement for a national collection, for which the greatest facilities should be given. Having arrived too early, we waited a long while seated on the steps of a desolated-looking doorway, and gazing at several curious slabs in bas-relief, ranged along the wall of the garden; they represent warriors in chain armour, but there is neither name, number, nor any information attached to them. We had leisure also to remark the very loose manner in which the building had been put together; it was opened not long since, and already the stone balustrade of the ascent shows signs of approaching dislocation. (...) When the door was at length opened, the attendance or rather the non-attendance, was equally faulty. Meeting with no one to point out the way to a stranger, we wander about, up and down the bare stone stairs, get amongst the classes, are elaborately conducted by a sympathetic but mistaken old lady, quite in the wrong direction; descend in despair and finally stumble upon a room full of minerals. This is a beginning. We admired some splendid species of agate, another equally interesting but not unknown natural productions; we group round the stuffed birds and beasts, with a vivid impression of having seen the same before in many another city; we pass on to the Egyptian mummies and other old world remains, until the two or three last rooms repay us in some degree. In one we see, amongst others of the same kind, a magnificent jeweled collar and crown, a relic of barbarian splendour; in another, church ornaments and vestments are exhibited, with a most interesting series of water-colour drawings of ancient sites and half-ruined buildings of historical interest. Some of them – such as Curtea d’Argesh – have been elaborately restored, and it is satisfactory to be able still to see the old buildings of the monastery as they appeared before they were cleared out of the way by the “restoring” process. In the last room of the suite we find the celebrated “Trésor”, or rather the place where it is kept in a vault to be exhibited on certain days to the public. Above the vault is raised a sort of catafalque with coloured representations of it on three sides; the fourth face gives a view of Buzeu, where this rich discovery was made by a peasant while digging his field. It proved to be a large disc or salver of gold, magnificently embossed; upon this were placed smaller platters, cups, and vases all richly embossed and jeweled; the people called it the “Hen and Chickens”. It was taken to Bukurest, where it was pronounced to be a unique specimen of Gothic work; it was afterwards sent to one of the great Exhibitions (Paris or London); some thousand of pounds were, they say, deposited with the fortunate proprietor as caution money; the poor peasant, the discoverer from whom it had been purchased, received only some trifling remuneration. We did not see the “Trésor” itself, but the representations on the catafalque – most artistically executed – give a good idea of the work, and I was further fortunate enough to see facsimiles of some of the vases ornamenting an elegant and tastefully-decorated salon in the town house of M. Dimitri Stourdza. (...)”⁵² Mrs. Walker’s testimony is quite important from our point of view: without knowing the author or any details about the paintings on display, she had the opportunity to see the water colours done by Szathmari after his above-mentioned photographs taken at Curtea de Argeş before its restoration.

⁵¹ J. W. Ozanne, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

⁵² Mrs. [Mary Adelaide] Walker, *op. cit.*, p. 171–173.



Fig. 29. Franz Dusc hek, The Oteteleşanu Palace at Măgurele – the main entrance, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 30. Franz Dusc hek, The Oteteleşanu Palace seen from the park, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 31. Franz Duschek, Bridge on Oteteleşanu estate at Măgurele, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 32. Franz Duschek, The park of the Oteteleşanu estate at Măgurele, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 33. Franz Duschek, The University seen from the Colțea Tower, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 34. Franz Duschek, Radu Vodă Bridge over the Dâmbovița River and the tanners' neighborhood, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

Dâmbovița was still attractive for the camera and the photographer took the opportunity to immortalize some of its bridges (Fig. 34) and Casa Apelor (the Water House, an installation to purify the muddy waters of that rivulet) (Fig. 35). In 1874 and 1875, Duschek took some pictures of Bucharest, with both old and new monuments such as the Bucur and Stavropoleos Churches – posed almost from the same angle as it was used by Szathmari years before (Figs. 36, 37) –, Radu Vodă (Fig. 38) and Zlătari Monasteries (Fig. 39), the New St. Spiridon church with its gothic spires (Fig. 40), and Podul Mogoșoaiei, the main street

of the city with its elegant shops, restaurants and dancing halls, such as Frascati, Bossel and Hotel Oteteleşanu with its celebrated café (Fig. 41). At Bossel's there were organized joyous masked balls during Carnival. The foreign travellers enjoyed a lot the company of the locals concealing their faces under masks. A lot of jokes and pranks were made during that season. Ozanne who spent three years among Romanians, in Bucharest – which he correctly called “The City of Pleasure” – had the opportunity to witness such a prank and to save two naïve foreigners from spending a fortune with some jolly men in disguised: “Peculiar to the Carnival are the *bals masqués* (...) These are very amusing. (...) There is, of course, much flirtation, not unmingled with intrigue, and supper is always to be had afterwards at the hotel opposite. Sometimes the men dress up as women, which proceeding occasionally leads to confusion. One night two raw youths fresh from England found themselves at a *bals masque*. They knew nobody, and I was much surprised to perceive them, after the lapse of a few minutes, marching about each with a lady on his arm. Half an hour after, on approaching the *buffet*, I noticed the pair seated on a sofa with their *belles*, whom they were regaling with ice and *bonbons* in the most sumptuous manner. Fancying that I detected something strange in the voice of one of the ladies, I walked up and soon was in conversation with the party. The laugh of the fair one confirmed my suspicions, and a glance at her hand, which was as large as my own, made everything clear. Bending over the blushing damsel, I whispered a few words into her ear, and the raw lads rapidly became jealous. I had recognized a couple of Wallachians with whom I was slightly acquainted, and who were making merry at their expense. A few minutes after, the victims were wandering about alone and disconsolate, minus a napoleon or two consumed in refreshments. This is just the sort of things which the light-hearted Roumanians would enjoy, fun of every kind and practical joking being entirely in their line”⁵².

Besides other customers interested to have their likenesses made in his studio, Duschek took portraits of the fashionable ladies costumed for such balls, thus specializing himself in masquerade pictures⁵³. Frascati was still fashionable in 1877 when the foreign war correspondents poured the Capital city. “Nous voici a café Frascati” wrote Mlochowski de Belina “qui est le café Bignon de Bukarest, et l’on y vient des quatre coins de la ville. Figurez-vous une sale longue et étroite ornée de glaces. Au centre, un large comptoir chargé de pâtisseries et de flacons de liqueurs. De petites tables de marbre sont partout entourées de consommateurs, entre lesquels les garçons en veste courte flânent avec cet air de nonchalance et cette paresse heureuse qui sont aussi bien roumaines que napolitaines”⁵⁴.

In 1878, a few months after his return from the Bulgarian battlefields where he documented the Russian troops fighting in the Oriental War along with the Romanian army⁵⁵ Duschek took new pictures on the central area of the city. He photographed Michael the Brave's statue, the work of the French sculptor Albert-Ernest Carrier-Belleuse, uncovered in late 1874 in front of the University (Fig. 42). On both sides were placed the Turkish guns captured from the Ottoman Army at the siege of Grivitza during the war, in 1877. The Soutzo Palace with its large arched windows and gothic ornaments can be seen on the left. Marsillac made a detailed description of this elegant residence: “M. Grégoire Soutzo habite une demeure vraiment aristocratique. Une large grille entoure une vaste cour plantée d'arbres, ornée de plates-bandes et d'un bassin de marbre où, pendant l'été, des cygnes jouent sous une gerbe d'eau miroitant au soleil. Au milieu de la cour s'élève une belle habitation flanquée de tourelles et décorée de riches balcons. Il est à regretter que les couleurs verte et rose dont on a peint la façade et que le temps a altérées ôtent à cette superbe demeure le caractère sérieux qui lui convient. On entre d'abord dans un vestibule immense, au fond duquel se trouve un large escalier recouvert de tapis; sur le premier palier, une glace d'une dimension peu ordinaire permet aux invités et surtout aux dames de jeter un dernier regard sur leur toilette avant d'arriver dans les salons. Ici l'escalier se bifurque et une double rampe conduit sur une vaste galerie, ornée de colonnes et de bas reliefs, à droite et à gauche de laquelle sont les tribunes des musiciens. Les grands appartements circulent autour de cette galerie. Ils sont meublés avec élégance. L'une des plus charmantes choses que l'on y voie, ce sont les réduits mystérieux et riches qui se trouvent dans les tourelles. Ce sont de petits boudoirs en miniature, pleins de luxe et de goût”⁵⁶.

⁵² J. W. Ozanne, *op. cit.*, p. 153–154.

⁵³ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Balurile din secolul al XIX-lea*, Fundația Culturală D'ale Bucureștilor, București, 1997, p. 17.

⁵⁴ A. Mlochowski de Belina, *op. cit.*, Paris (1878), p. 62–63.

⁵⁵ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Penel și sabie. Artiști documentariști și corespondenți de front în Războiul de Independență (1877–1878)*, București, 2002, p. 126–135.

⁵⁶ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Causeries*, in *La Voix de la Roumanie*, no. 14/23 Fevrier 1865 (n.s.).



Fig. 35. Franz Duschek, Casa Apelor (The Water House), albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 36. Franz Duschek, The Stavropoleos Church, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

In 1860, The Ministry of Public Education in Bucharest launched a program to document the monuments of the country, following the example of the French *Mission Héliographique* of ten years ago⁵⁷. Five commissioners were sent throughout Wallachia to record and file every important monument. While

⁵⁷Anne de Mondenard, *La Mission héliographique*, Monum, Paris, 2002, p. 33–42.

Alexandru Odobescu and Dimitrie Pappasoglu took an artist to draw the monuments worth of interest, Cesar Bolliac used an unidentified photographer to take pictures of the churches he studied⁵⁸. At least one of those pictures with which he illustrated his reports – that of the Bucovăț Monastery in Little Wallachia (Oltenia) – is still preserved in the Romanian National Archives.



Fig. 37. Franz Duschek, The Stavropoleos Church, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

Moritz Benedict Baer (1811–1887) completed in 1870 an album with a carte-de-visite series of pictures with views from Bucharest. He hadn't the same large angle lens as Szathmari and was unable to get good general views of monuments and public buildings. Instead he focused on interesting details or some special angles of the same edifice such as the Cotroceni Palace. One viewpoint was from the front showing the main entrance under the arch of the tower-gate and another view facing the back yard. Other places looked much more imposing than in Szathmari's pictures for they are portrayed from a mounting angle, such as the Bucur Church (Fig. 43), the New St. George Church, St. Demeter Church, St. Spiridon Church, the Bărăția Tower (Fig. 44), the Radu Vodă and the Stavropoleos Monasteries. Stavropoleos, the 18th century church, was a jewel of the city due to its stone carved columns and capitels along with the fully painted walls. Baer also documented the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Defense, the Court of Justice, the Military Hospital, the Malmaison Barracks (Fig. 45), the Elena Doamna Orphenage and the Filaret Raylway Station (Fig. 46). Baer succeeded also to catch various segments of Podul Mogoșoaiei high street on several of his plates: one depicts Hotel Hugues and Jobin shop – it was almost ironic to see the outdated water sellers with their barrels on wheels stopped in front of the two exclusivist enterprises like the old times facing the new times on the main avenue of Bucharest (Fig. 47). Another showed the street winding towards the National Theatre; these are followed by two views of the theatre's façade taken from different angles (Figs. 48, 49).

Marsillac was true when he stated: "L'histoire des rues d'une ville est l'histoire de la ville même avec toutes ses grandeurs et ses faiblesses et sa physionomie extérieure, fidèle image de sa vie intime"⁵⁹. Podul Mogoșoaiei was such a street with a rich history. It was the main street of the capital, lined on both sides with the most elegant private or public buildings and fashionable shops of the day plus the ruling prince's palace. As described by Ozanne, that avenue was elegant and interesting from an architectonic point of view there being concentrated the most important buildings of the city: "Here is the Podu Mogoșoi, the principal

⁵⁸ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Artă și document* (Art and Document), Bucharest, 1990, p. 175–176.

⁵⁹ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Le Podou Mogochoi, La Voix de la Roumaniev*, no. 39/17 Août 1865 (n.s.).

street of the city, and the one in which the best shops are to be found. In it are the large hotels, which have of late years been rising in such profusion, and which are so well and so luxuriously managed. The palace, the residence of the princely family, lies about half-way down this street. The appearance of this building is by no means striking, though the interior atones for many deficiencies. The reception-rooms are large and exquisitely furnished, and Prince Charles has devoted much time and attention to the decoration of his abode. Opposite the grand entrance is a little guard-house, always the scene of much red-tape commotions, as the soldiers appear to be incessantly turning out to perform some ceremony. (...) Many of the public buildings, including the Prefecture of Police, lie in the Podu Mogoşoi, which is, as I have already said, the haunt of the *flâneur*⁶⁰. In spite of this enthusiastic description the ruling prince's palace had nothing appealing in it as



Fig. 38. Franz Duschek, The Radu Vodă Monastery, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

⁶⁰ J. W. Ozanne, *op. cit.*, p. 13–15.



Fig. 39. Franz Dusc hek, The Zlătari Inn and church, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 40. Franz Dusc hek, The New St. Spiridon Church and the Metropolitan Church, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 41. Franz Duschek, Podul Mogoșoaiei, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 42. Franz Duschek, The statue of Michael the Brave, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 43. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Bucur Church, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 44. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Bărăția Tower, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 45. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Malmaison Barracks, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 46. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Filaret Railway Station, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

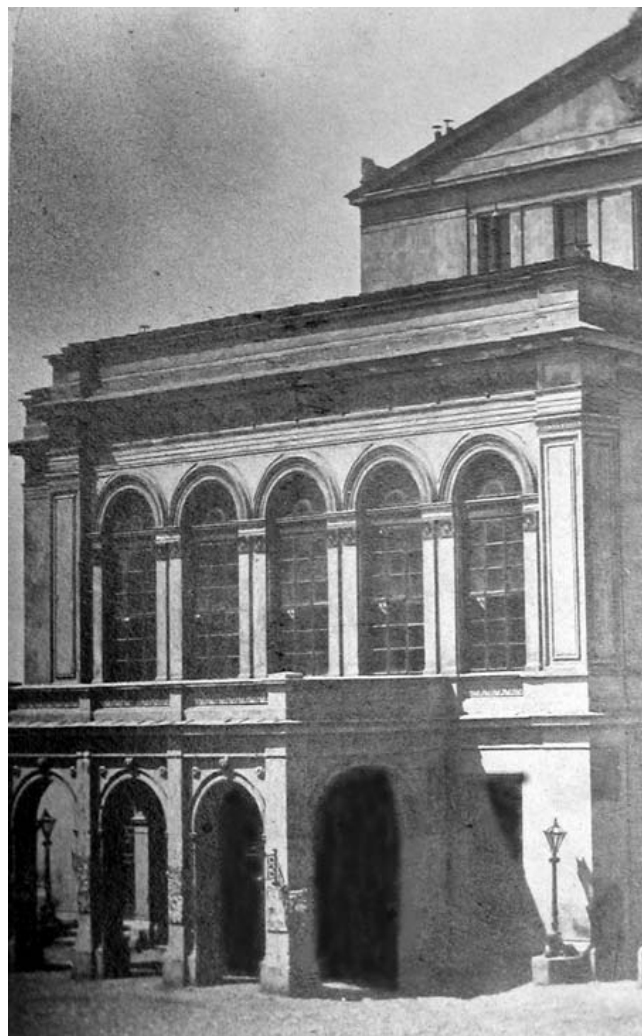


Fig. 47. Moritz Benedict Baer, Podul Mogoșoaiei – Victorine Jobin shop and Hotel Hugues with sacagii (water sellers) in the foreground, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 48. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Grand Theatre and Török House, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

Fig. 49. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Grand Theatre – the main entrance, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Marsillac noted in one of his articles, in 1865: “On vient de décorer le fronton du palais princier de bas-relief en plâtre, représentant l’écusson de la Roumanie surmonté de la couronne fermée, emblème de la souveraineté, et soutenu par deux anges à demi couchés, qui rien n’empêche de prendre pour symboles de l’indolence orientale, je ne veux pas dire roumaine. (...) Les bas-reliefs dont nous parlons remplacent très avantageusement un grand trou noir qui se trouvait au beau milieu du tympan de la façade. L’ensemble est assez agréable et dénote un talent d’artiste dans son auteur. Bien que la matière en soit très fragile, il y a bîne d’espérer que la corniche protégera le plâtre contre les chances de destruction auxquelles il est exposé. Ce n’est cependant pas là encore, il s’en faut de beaucoup, ce que nous rêvons pour la demeure du souverain de cinq millions d’hommes. Lorsque, par euphémisme, nous donnons le nom de palais à la grande mesure qu’habite le prince des Roumains nous pensons que pas un grand seigneur en Europe n’est logé d’une façon aussi mesquine, et nous construisons un édifice qui serait tout autrement digne de servir de sanctuaire à la majesté nationale incarnée dans un homme”⁶¹. When he arrived in Bucharest, on 10th of May 1866, the new ruling prince Carol von Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen could not understand or believe the words of his companion, General Nicolae Golescu, when they passed by the unimposing edifice and was told that that would be his stately residence. Intrigued, the prince asked the general with legitimate astonishment: “Où est le palais?”⁶² Moritz Baer had not pictured that palace but that of Cotroceni, which was the summer residence of the ruling prince remodeled in the precinct of a monastery (Fig. 50). He also pointed his camera towards the guard house and the soldiers fronting it, ready for being reviewed (Fig. 51). The infantrymen are clad in their full regalia. A drummer is placed on the far left, between the sentry box and the lieutenant who is at the head of his troop. The Cotroceni Palace was much praised by war correspondent Mlochowski de Belin who

⁶¹ Ulysse de Marsillac, *Causeries*, în *La Voix de la Roumanie*, no. 32/ 29 Juin 1865.

⁶² *Memoriile regelui Carol I al României de un martor ocular*, 1992, vol. I, p. 60.

covered the 1877 campaign and followed the Russian troops on the battlefield. When Tsar Alexander II and his sons visited Bucharest they were feasted by Prince Carol at his summer residence. That was a good opportunity for the journalist to see that place: “(...) Cotroceni est un ancien monastère qu’on n’a pas eu encore le temps de convertir en château. Ce n’est qu’un demi-monastère ou un demi-château, vu que la moitié seulement de cette ancienne construction a été appropriée par les soins du prince Couza à servir de villégiature aux hospodars de Roumanie. Cotroceni est bâtie sur une élévation d’où l’on voit Bucarest aussi bien que l’on voit Paris de la terrasse de Saint-Germain. Ajoutez que, ce monticule est entouré de plantes de vignes, et de grands arbres séculaires. Les roses, les dahlias, et une infinité de lauriers roses et de plantes exotiques”⁶³.

Andreas D. Reiser took some general views of Bucharest in 1873. His snapshots hadn’t changed too much from the views taken by Angerer almost two decades before. But the city hasn’t changed either. The description left by Florence Berger is full of minute details concerning the mixture of styles, the poor finishing of the new edifices and the neglect of the old ones, stressing also on the causes of this state of affairs: “The architectural structure of the city admits of no classification. The unschooled fancy of the designer, ignorant of even the first rules of aesthetic art, has been carried out by the rude hands of the gipsy mason. Plaster moldings in lavish profusion, blind-windows, and black water-pipes winding their serpentine length down the very front of the houses, are a few of these errors of taste whose name is legion. Spire churches, capped by the aerial, glittering Greek cross, with gaudy paintings of their white-washed walls, and a general impression of unsubstantial newness, and are thinly spread throughout the town. (...) Most of the houses are built with a light covered-in gallery running all round the upper story, which serves the double purpose of keeping out the heat in summer and the cold in winter, and courtyards where the fig-tree spreads out its broad green fingers, the oleander rises thick in foliage, and the wild dogs turn in from the street to quarrel and fight. Everywhere around the unaccustomed eye is shocked by the most violent of contrasts – the extremes of painful freshness and dull decay; of prodigal splendor and the misery that is beyond shame; of perfect taste and barbaric whimsicality. The flaunting mansion of nouveau riche, whose name was unheard of yesterday, glistening with scarce-dried paint and gay with gilding and plaster-of-Paris ornament, encroaches upon the wild garden and dismantled ruins of some bankrupt Boyar’s house, one for whose raiment the Jews have long ago cast lots, whose flocks and herds have passed away into the keeping of The Tribes, and whose bones are in all probability moldering at Filaret. The *mahala* of the peasant that is something between a pigsty, an Irish shanty, and an Esquimaux’s hut, creeps up to the very gates of the palace, where sentries stand leaning on their muskets, and great personages go in and out. And the picture of sordid wretchedness, the peasant himself shuffles along in the gutter, narrowly escaping being overturned as the elegant patrician, in his Paris-built Victoria and costly pelisse of Siberian elk, whirls rapidly by, showering down a plentiful cascade of mud from his carriage-wheels”⁶⁴.

Eduard Pesky (1835–1909), a painter and photographer, was active in Bucharest in the 1880s and 1890s. He learnt the trade as apprentice in Samuel Herter’s studio in Braşov (Kronstadt in German) and then crossed the Carpathian Mountains and settled in Romania. He began his career in 1870s, in Galaţi, in partnership with other photographers. Their studio was advertised as *Atelier artistique/E.Pesky, M-e Julie & C-ie/Strada Domnăsca/Galatz* (Artistic Studio/E.Pesky, Mrs. Julie & Co/Strada Domnăsca/Galatz). By 1882 he moved to Bucharest and bought Andreas D. Reiser’s studio which he turned into his own. He was a very good portrait-maker and used his pictures to turn them into easel painting portraits when ordered. But he also took some cityscapes of particular interest of the capital city in 1884. On cabinet cards he used to offer its customers new images of some of the most important streets and buildings in Bucharest such as Calea Victoriei (The Victory Avenue⁶⁵), the National Theatre, the Mint, the University (Fig. 52) – which was viewed in a descending angle from the top of the Colţea Tower from where he also took some general views of the city (Fig. 53). That old tower was to be demolished in 1888 in order to make room for a wider avenue. He used almost the same spot to shoot his images as his photographer colleagues a decade or so ago. But unlike their works which, due to longer time of exposure, were seldom showing any people on those very

⁶³ A. Mlochowski de Belina, *op. cit.*, p. 63.

⁶⁴ Florence K. Berger, *op. cit.*, p. 43–45.

⁶⁵ The name of Calea Victoriei was given to that avenue after the Oriental War of 1877–1878 when Romania got its independence from the Ottoman Empire; that street was formerly known as Podul Mogoşoaiei because it connected the village of Mogoşoaia, where the ruling prince Constantin Brâncoveanu (1654–1714) had his summer residence, with his official residence downtown. Being one of the most important streets in Bucharest it was covered with logs placed crosswise, the first means to pave the muddy and dusty drives of the capital.

animated streets and around those important public buildings, Pesky used modern lenses and more sensitive glass plates which enabled him to catch the vividness of the neighborhood. Nevertheless the views of Calea Victoriei are different than those taken by Baer and Szathmari before him. It is true that meantime new buildings were added to that important avenue. The photographer placed his camera at the corner of the avenue, facing Hotel Imperial, a coquettish three-stories building adorned with sculptures and stucco ornaments (Fig. 54). Pesky also pictured the interior of Biserica Albă (The White Church) one of the most important and old edifice on that avenue. The dim light, the glittering of silver candlesticks and of the crystal chandelier, the faded shades of the icons on the temple gave an almost painterly effect to the image (Fig. 55).



Fig. 50. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Cotroceni Palace, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 51. Moritz Benedict Baer, The Guard House, albumen print from a wet collodion negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 52. Eduard Pesky, The University seen from the Colțea Tower, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.



Fig. 53. Eduard Pesky, Bucharest general view from the Colțea Tower towards Bărăția, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.

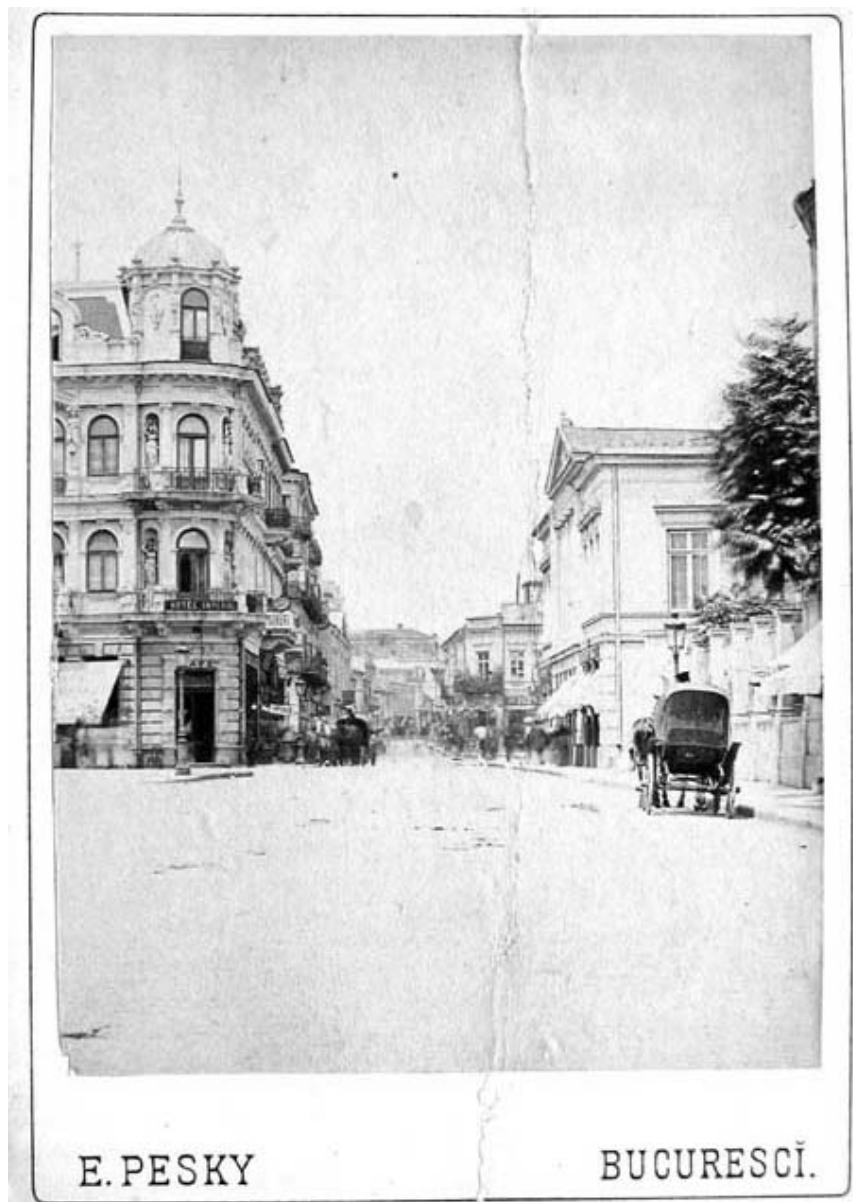


Fig. 54. Eduard Pesky, Calea Victoriei and Hotel Imperial, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.

Pesky used a mounting angle to capture the imposing National Theatre which was the most elegant venue in the city (Fig. 56). Both foreign and Romanian actors, opera singers and musicians, were competing to perform on this stage for an enthusiastic audience. Ozanne, who saw it during his three-year-residence in Bucharest, between 1870 and 1873, described it as follows: “Not far from the [Ruling Prince’s] palace is the theatre, a fine edifice, capable of accommodating a very large house. It is one of the most comfortable in Europe, and is consecrated, according to the season, to the opera, the French stage, and the Carnival *bals masqués*. The Prince has of course his own box, and the rest of the rank and fashion regularly patronise the performances. The theatre is intimately bound up with the lives of the Moldo-Wallachians”⁶⁶. A few years later, when Florence Berger spent a winter in what she also called The City of Pleasure, the theatre was still attractive both for its exquisite furnishings, for the nice performances and for the elegant society which crowded in. It was the appropriate place for studying the upper class, as Berger noted in her memoirs: “It is a pretty little *salle*, this of the *Teatru Nacional*, gay in pale mauve draperies and gilded ornamentation, and one that might successfully vie with others of far greater pretensions in larger cities. It is looking especially brilliant to-night, and flaunts like a vast tulip-bed with the dresses of the ladies, in which red and yellow

⁶⁶ J. W. Ozanne, *op. cit.*, p. 15.

predominate, and the scarlet and amber uniforms of the men. (...) Any one who desires to study the ways of society in the capital, must frequent not only the Chaussée and the salon, but the theatre also. Here, as in Spain, the ladies turn their boxes into little drawing-rooms, where they receive their friends and acquaintances, and many a *grande passion* that startles the world by its intensity had its birth between these walls, sacred to the mask and to the lyre; many an intrigue that awakens ridicule by its long duration is fostered in these dainty satin-hung boudoirs”⁶⁷.

Ten years later, in 1896, to honour Emperor Franz Joseph’s visit to Romania, the capital city was lavishly decorated. Some of the distinguished photographers in Bucharest, such as Franz Mandy, Ioan Spirescu, Gustav Waber and Franz Duschek Jr., immortalized these decorations. Spirescu bound his large photographs in an album. Plaster arches, fountains and sculptures were erected on the main streets and public places. The Peace Fountain was placed on an empty space at the corner of Calea Victoriei and Elizabeth Boulevard where used to be the Sărindar Monastery, demolished in late 1880s (Fig. 57). The sculpture reminded Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi’s Statue of Liberty in the New York Harbor: the same toga draping the deity, same spiked crown and torch on her outstretched arm. There were only few differences, such as the two cherubs at her feet and four other genii on lower pedestals, on the two sides of the fountain. A huge imperial crown was suspended at the corner of Calea Victoriei and Elizabeth Boulevard, in front of Grand Hotel (Fig. 58). The Austrian coat-of-arms or the imperial cipher was placed on every pole lining the streets. Brilliant adornments were added to the most important cross roads. Flags and green garlands were encircling the National Theatre’s Plaza (Fig. 59). At least three arches were erected in various parts of Bucharest: one in front of Gara de Nord (The North Railway Station), (Fig. 60), another at the beginning of The Independence Boulevard which was recently cut, and another at the entrance of the Controceni Palace. The Hall of Honour in the North Station was also abundantly furnished with carved pedestals and banisters, plaster angels on each side of the door, silk and velvet curtains, artistic flower displays surrounding allegoric sculptures and the busts of the emperor and empress under arches adorned with canopies (Fig. 61). In comparison with all these theatrical, pompous set design, the Royal Palace seemed poor in its sobriety, having only some garlands and tiny flags on the iron fence and the poles in front (Fig. 62). Spirescu’s portfolio was offered to the emperor and other royalty.



Fig. 55. Eduard Pesky, Interior of Biserica Albă (The White Church), albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.

⁶⁷ Florence K. Berger, *op. cit.*, p. 155–157.



Fig. 56. Eduard Pesky, The National Theatre, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Museum of the City of Bucharest.



Fig. 57. Ioan Spirescu, The Peace Fountain, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 58. Ioan Spirescu, The Imperial Crown on Elizabeth Boulevard at the corner of Calea Victoriei, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 59. Ioan Spirescu, The National Theatre Plaza, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

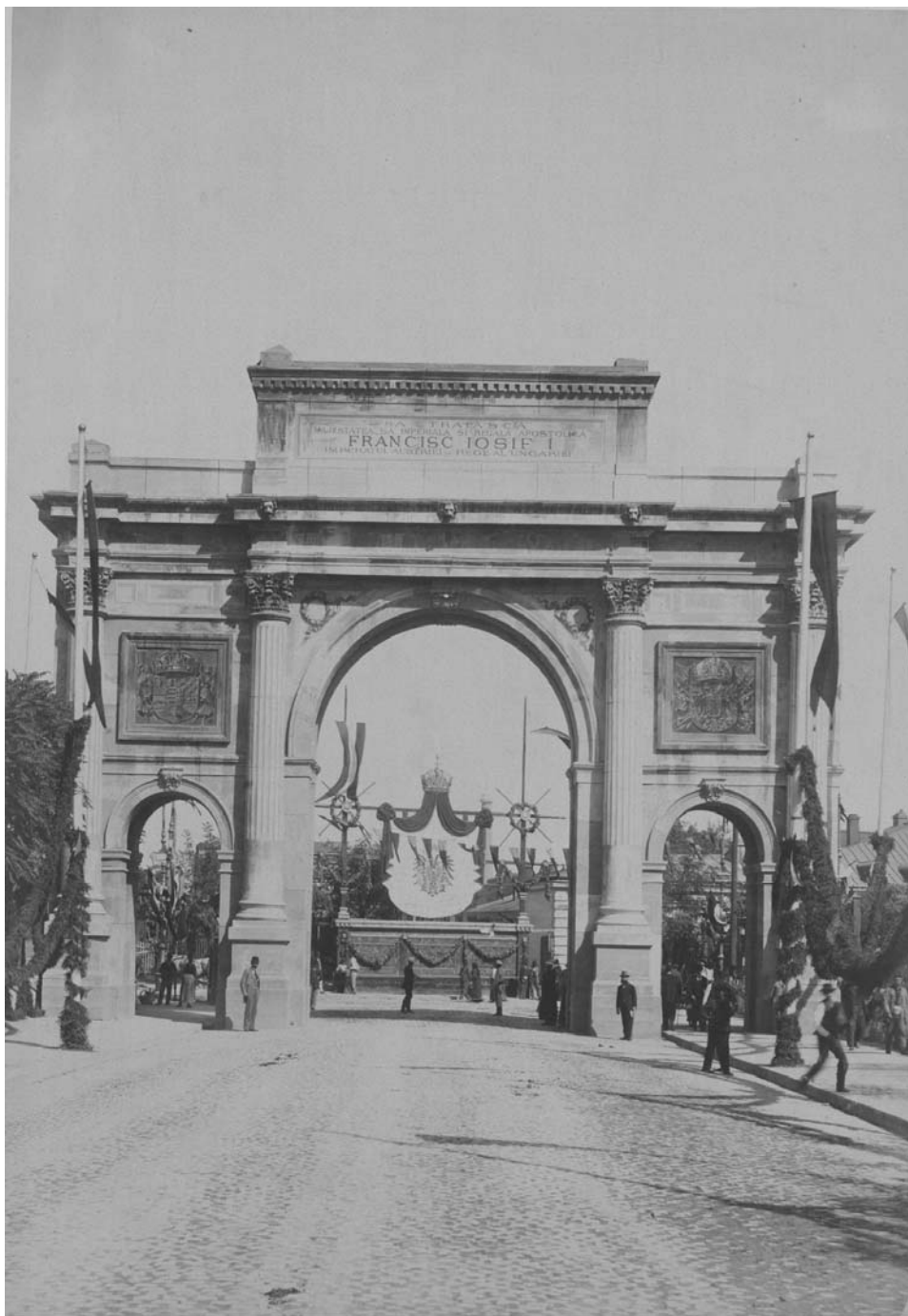


Fig. 60. Ioan Spirescu, The Arch of Triumph in front of the North Railway Station, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

At the 1900 Exposition Universelle in Paris, many Romanian photographers exhibited their works and received important prizes such as: Franz Duschek Jr. and Franz Mandy were awarded the silver medal, Ioan Niculescu and Ioan Spirescu were awarded the bronze medal. Some of these medals were rewarding cityscape albums exhibited on that occasion.

Besides their routine studio portraits, most of the 19th century photographers who were active in Bucharest devoted their time to portraying their hometown or the historic monuments of the surrounding area⁶⁸. Thus they left an enduring record of the alterations and construction that took place over time in the City of Pleasure.

⁶⁸ Adrian-Silvan Ionescu, *Despre arhitectura și urbanismul din România secolului al XIX-lea în memorialele călătorilor străini*, in Irina Gavrilă (editor) *Frontierele necunoscutului. De la vest spre est prin țările române: impresii de călătorie (secolul XIX)*,



Fig. 61. Ioan Spirescu, The Hall of Honour at the North Railway Station, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.



Fig. 62. Ioan Spirescu, The Royal Palace, albumen print from a gelatin dry plate negative, Library of the Romanian Academy.

Editura Oscar Print, București, 2011, p. 15–60; *idem*, *The Romanian Architecture and Cityscape. The Legacy of Nineteenth-Century Photographers*, in Micheline Nilsen (editor), *Nineteenth-Century Photographs and Architecture. Documenting History, Charting Progress, and Exploring the World*, Ashgate Publishing Limited, Farnham, 2013, p. 217–232.